







Cordially,  
H. G. W.

Feb. 1938

# THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER

Volume V, No. 2

JUNE, 1939



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Published by THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER, General Offices: 12 East 22nd Street, New York

- Peter Hugh Reed, Editor; Nathan Broder and Philip Miller, Associate Editors; Paul Girard, Circulation Manager.
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Insert: Prominent Musical Personalities — Past and Present

No. 20 — ENZO PINZA (By Request)

# WHAT TO EXPECT IN RECORD REPRODUCTION

ROBERT S. LANIER

THE MUSIC LOVER OF TODAY WHO depends on records for any considerable part of his pleasure stands in an uncomfortable relationship to the technique of sound reproduction. In the first place, this technique, in the past few years especially, has grown to be a magnificent servant to the music lover, a servant continually improved in quality and resourcefulness. For the unique service of recorded music, the music lover is thoroughly grateful, and has taken it to his bosom to such a degree that the musical climate of the decade has been seriously affected. On the other hand, the technique of sound reproduction as at present commercially constituted is capable of playing the foulest tricks imaginable on the unsuspecting music lover, so that a feeling of distrust and resentment has grown up towards the benefactors, the scientific and commercial genii, encouraging a fringe of sporadic and fairly unsuccessful revolt.

It is not possible to assign complete responsibility for this state of affairs to any single source, although our feelings may lead us at times to shake an angry fist in some specific direction. Among other things, the ignorance of the average record user, the difficulties in which the technique is still submerged, and the nature of commercial distribution should not be overlooked. The larger manufacturers have always had a ready retort to idealistically minded critics—that they are doing things they believe will make money, and that if they did not make money in respectable quantities, the recording of music could not exist at all, much less be continually improved as a result of expensive research.

There are many things that might be said in the face of this familiar justification, but this article is not designed as an entry to that old battlefield. It is meant instead as an attempt at some honest answers to the follow-

ing queries, as expressed by the average record user without any technical knowledge: How much should I know about the technique of sound reproduction for my own protection? What can I expect and what should I look for in buying a reproducer?

Few of us can be sound engineers, with a working knowledge of all the known factors in this complex and still largely unexplored business. Ultimately we who use records for pleasure are in the hands of a group of highly trained technicians, who spend their entire time in expensive laboratories, digging into the difficulties that surround the subject. But the fact remains that the things these men do know are not coming through to the user in the uniform way we might expect. The gap at the present time between what is possible and what is usually done happens to be quite wide, so that an elementary knowledge of the principal faults of reproducers, used with a full consciousness of its limitations, is a necessity to the record user. Besides the advantage of being on guard in this sense, the great majority of music lovers will find even a slight acquaintance with the science of sound reproduction a rewarding background to their use and enjoyment of records.

How do we buy a symphony orchestra when we buy a flat disc with a hole in the center? On the disc is a spiral groove, which is actually a line with a tiny wave in it. These tiny waves, if a pivoted needle is moved through them at a definite speed, will swing the needle from side to side at such frequencies, and with such widths of swing, that the needle follows the same complex series of movements the air waves described in emanating from the orchestra, the air movements that the ear interprets as the "sound" of that particular piece. The pickup is a special type of electric generator, which generates electric power that pulsates, or varies, to follow the

swings of the needle. The amplifier builds up this series of minute spurts of electrical power without changing their relationships to each other, much as a small photograph is enlarged to a bigger one. The loudspeaker receives the enlarged pulsations, or variations in power, and its cone moves back and forth to follow them, pushing the air into motion with the same series of movements the needle described in passing over the record. The ear interprets these air motions exactly as it would the "sound" from the original orchestra. Thus a sound reproducer is a series of transformations, from sound, or air movements, to a wavy line on a wax disc, to the back and forth swing of a needle, to electrical power variations, to the back and forth movement of a loudspeaker cone, to air waves again—and the miracle is complete.

Now a theoretically ideal reproducer would make the air move away from its loudspeaker with exactly the same pulsations the needle went through in passing over the record. Unfortunately, all sound reproducing systems known today go off on their own, more or less, departing from absolute faithfulness to what they receive and causing various kinds of distortion.

#### VARIETIES OF DISTORTION

There are several kinds of distortion that the record listener should recognize and try to avoid if he is to enjoy his records for any considerable period of time. These are harmonic distortion, frequency discrimination, peaks, and resonant points. The last three are really separate aspects of the same thing, that manifest themselves more or less distinctly in phonographs.

When harmonic distortion is present,—and it can be introduced by any link in the reproducing chain,—the variation, or air pulsation, coming from the reproducer, does not have the same exact rate of increase and decrease as the variation put into the reproducer—the output is not strictly *proportional* to the input. Because of the nature of sound, any deviation from strict proportionality—or "linearity"—results in the addition, *by the reproducer itself*, of sounds not in the original. These spurious sounds are actually a string of harmonics erected on each tone received by the reproducer, hence the name. Now since the character of a musical tone depends on the harmonics, or overtones, that accompany it, it is easily seen that the addition, by the reproducer, of extra harmonics, not only to the fundamental notes, but to their rightful harmonics, will completely change the char-

acter of the original tone and result in a hopeless muddle of sound. In the higher frequencies harmonic distortion not only changes the sound, but is extremely disagreeable to the ear.

Harmonic distortion is usually measured as the percentage relationship between the total power generated, and the power represented in the output by the spurious harmonics. The present commercial rule-of-thumb is that 5% harmonic distortion, or less, is "distortionless" reproduction. However, this limitation on harmonic distortion is a very inadequate one for many reasons. Anyone who has heard a reproducer in which the harmonic distortion has been engineered to a very low value will agree with me emphatically—the clarity of such a system is startling.

#### FREQUENCY DISCRIMINATION

Frequency discrimination is simply the failure of the system to transmit pulsations of all frequencies in the musical range with equal power. No characteristic of reproducers is so familiar to the public as this. Earlier reproducers failed miserably to cover the musical range from, say, 30 cycles, the lowest pitch, to about 8000-10,000, the highest, being effective only in the range of 150 to 3500 or so. The achievement of the phonograph engineers in extending the frequency range has been dramatized for a very large public by the familiar words, "high fidelity". Today, the best recordings and any respectable reproducer are capable of up to 7500 cycles, and down to 50-60, which is a good frequency range for musical reproduction. Many present-day recordings are reputed to be deliberately cut off in the 6000-6500 range, which still gives fairly good high frequencies.

However, the term "high fidelity", invented to describe this achievement, has come to be a cover for a multitude of sins. Whenever a manufacturer can think of nothing better to say about his product, he slaps on "high fidelity" in the hope of capturing some of the glory still clinging to the term. Actually, a blanket "high fidelity" description is today a pretty good danger signal.

"Peaks" are narrow ranges of frequencies that the reproducer transmits very much better than the average. The result of peaks is an annoying over-brightness or tweaky quality, or a very unbalanced situation in which certain ranges or instruments are so loud as to obscure all others. The phrase, "flat to 10,000 cycles", is supposed to mean both a usable response up to 10,000 cycles and an absence of serious peaks within that range. But "flat"

has come to be as suspect as "high fidelity", subject to as wide a variety of interpretations as the traffic will bear.

Resonant points are cases of extreme peaks. In nearly all pulsating systems, whether mechanical or electrical, there is a certain frequency at which strong vibration is sustained with very little application of power. The system nearly continues to vibrate by itself. This is called "resonance". Resonance is used to great effect in all modern radio circuits, but in a system that must transmit a wide range of frequencies equally well, resonance within that range is an intolerable fault. It is characteristic of the needle structure in most magnetic pickups, and in cheaper pickups it is reduced by the rubber blocks found near the pivots.

#### CABINET RESONANCE

Cabinet resonance is a phenomenon with which record users should certainly be familiar. It occurs when some part of the cabinet, or the air column in back of the speaker, is resonant, usually in the bass range. It causes the resonant frequency to jump out at the listener like a miniature explosion, shaking the cabinet heavily. This will often cause the pickup arm or turntable to shake also, and since vibration of the pickup arm is equivalent to a heavy swing of the needle, the note is sent back through the amplifier at a disturbing volume. This last phenomenon is known as "feedback", is terribly annoying to the listener, and is not as rare as it ought to be.

Considering each link in the reproducing chain separately, and especially their present commercial manifestations, it can be said that the pickup is easily the weakest. The magnetic pickups used in home phonographs until about three years ago were lacking in both treble and bass, were too heavy and stiff, and had bad peaks. When the crystal pickup came into general use it was heralded as the ultimate in "high fidelity", etc., etc. It is now certain that the crystal pickup is far from the paragon it was thought to be. It has too heavy a bass response, it is subject to annoying peaks, and seems to show variability with changes in temperature and humidity.

There are magnetic pickups available costing from seventy-five to several hundred dollars which are really good, but they are obviously impractical for the average home reproducer. A line of magnetic pickups has recently appeared which may be the answer to the need for a good medium-priced pickup—but they have not yet had time to prove themselves. Pickups of radically improved per-

formance have been developed in various laboratories, notably one built at Harvard University about a year ago, and it is inconceivable that the larger manufacturers are not doing similar work, and will not meet the demand for a decent medium-priced pickup in the near future.

Meanwhile, what is the record user to do? Most important, he should register his disapproval in any way he can with the present commercial standards. For the present he will probably have to stick to the crystal in the low and medium price range. A person who wants the finest reproduction and has, say, \$350.00 or more to spend for a phonograph should by all means get a "professional" type magnetic pickup and use it with a specially designed amplifier and loudspeaker system.

In the case of the amplifier, the record user without quite extensive technical knowledge is pretty much in the hands of the manufacturer, or better, a really good sound equipment builder. The music lover can demand that his amplifier conform not merely to the commercial limitations on harmonic distortion but be engineered to the minimum distortion possible with the money available. The user has a certain choice as to the power capability of the amplifier. This should be in the five to twenty watt range, even though full volume in the average living room is one to four watts. The reason is that harmonic distortion goes up in almost direct proportion as the volume control is turned up, so that it is desirable to have an amplifier that will fill the room with the volume control about half way open. There are limits to this device of "power reserve", since power in vacuum-tube amplifiers costs money on a steeply rising curve.

#### POOR BAFFLING

Loudspeakers are for the most part adequate, considering their price and the amplifiers with which they are associated, but the way in which they are usually mounted, or "baffled", is poor to a distracting degree. The quality of sound from a loudspeaker is very heavily dependent on the nature of the surrounding air spaces, and the size, shape, and nature of the baffle. The phenomenon of cabinet resonance, already described, is one of the faults due to improper baffling, and *has played a very large part on the commercial scene*.

Some years back, when the electrical links in reproducers were much weaker in the bass than they are now, loudspeakers were mounted to have considerable cabinet resonance, which gave a nice boomy effect on certain notes that

passed muster for a good bass. As electrical circuits improved, and records were made with stronger bass, this boominess became more intolerable, so that finally the manufacturers recognized it as a fault, and the words "clean bass" began to appear in the ads. There was some improvement, but the last two years have seen a retrogression. Several of the most widely advertised phonographs in the medium and higher price range have today an inexcusable amount of cabinet resonance, or a deliberate heavy peak in the bass response of the amplifier—the effect achieved is much the same. This is apparently due to the theory that nothing is so impressive to the prospective purchaser as a good roaring bass—therefore the more it roars, the more machines will be sold.

In the high frequency range, cone loudspeakers are very directional, that is, the highs travel out in a straight line from the speaker and do not spread to listeners seated at an angle. Most commercial machines do not take account of this fact—it can be strikingly demonstrated by walking slowly past the front of the speaker and noticing the marked change in quality that occurs as you pass the axis of the speaker. Some form of reflector is necessary to spread the highs evenly through the room.

#### LOUDSPEAKER MOUNTING

All in all, the loudspeaker mounting is the link in the reproducer that the music lover has the best chance of improving with home construction. The writer hopes in future articles to present several attractive baffling methods that will improve quality.

At this point a warning is in order. The music lover must always remember that the ear is the real judge of the performance of a reproducer. The object of reproducing the music is to please the ear—if it fails to do this, no technical refinements have any meaning. There is a breed of "high fidelity" expert who will endure any awful sound from a loudspeaker, as long as his outfit exhibits some new trick lifted from a magazine. Now it happens that nine times out of ten, an improvement in one link of a reproducer will bring out formerly unsuspected faults in the other links, leaving the listener worse off than he was before. "Improvements" therefore have to be made with some knowledge of their effects on the whole.

On the other hand, one must be aware of the awful subjectivity of the human ear, which makes it very open to the influence of pride, habit, or opinion. Thus a heavily advertised

phonograph, or one on which the owner's discrimination is staked, will often sound very fine to the owner in spite of its real worth or lack of it. For this situation the skepticism which comes with a solid understanding of technique is the best corrective.

Keeping these things in mind, and being fully aware that the technical knowledge outlined here is meant not to cover the subject exhaustively but to give some practical aid to the music lover, let's try it out by going into a music store as a prospective phonograph buyer.

#### BUYING A PHONOGRAPH

We meet the salesman in front of a highly polished radio-phonograph combination, and peek in as he opens the top. A crystal pickup—nine cases out of ten,—with a reasonably long arm, eight to ten inches, and an offset head for better tracking. (This last may require rechecking.\*). The set is warming up, and meanwhile the salesman has been fiddling with the controls. Remember later to find out whether or not he has turned down the highs, (in 99 cases out of 100 he has), on the theory held solidly by the entire phonograph industry that *people don't really want to hear high frequencies*. The writer hopes some day to destroy conclusively this libel on the music lover. The real reason for any prejudice against high frequencies is that poorly designed reproducers reek with harmonic distortion in the upper range.

But this beautifully cabined job we are about to hear is "high quality" in every respect. Therefore we insist on hearing those highs. Make sure there is a fresh needle in the pickup, preferably straight steel, and that the record is a new one, a symphonic recording with a variety of passages.

As the record starts, notice the needle scratch—a certain minimum is inseparable from good high frequency reproduction. If the scratch is a high, wispy hiss, soft but very fine and clear, and not objectionable in volume, the high frequency response of the reproducer is probably excellent.

When the music starts, move back to get directly in line with the speaker and have the volume turned up as loud as can be comfortably listened to. At the first loud passage,

\*The importance of aligning the pickup has been comprehensively outlined in an article by Leland Chapman that appeared in the November 1937 issue of *The American Music Lover*. This article is procurable in pamphlet form at 15 cents per copy.

notice whether all the instruments hold clear, strong and separate, or whether they seem to merge into a more or less unpleasant loud noise. The latter is the characteristic effect of harmonic distortion. Also in very loud passages listen carefully for rattles and buzzes in the cabinet or speaker.

Make sure the record has some good heavy bass work in it. Listen for instruments like the cello, the double-bass, and the bass drum, and notice whether they seem to dominate when they enter a passage, booming out like cannon. This is cabinet resonance, especially if there is an almost continuous, very heavy bass that seems to be near *one note*. During the playing of the record feel the cabinet and if it sounds boomy and also shakes heavily during the playing of certain bass notes, you should certainly ask to see another machine. If you clearly hear the double basses go up or down an octave or so, at about the same volume as the rest of the orchestra, the bass is probably very good indeed.

Listen to a passage with a violin going well up into the mid-high range, two octaves and more above middle C. If the tone is hard, super-bright and ringing, perhaps very shrill, there are bad peaks through this range, or serious harmonic distortion. If the violin has its natural, open string tone, even and singing, with a good "bowed" quality, the response in this range is very good.

Listen to the trumpets and cornets for that good, high-pitched clangy quality, very clear-cut. Also if there is a recent flute recording, by all means have it played, at a high volume. Bad peaks and resonances will give it a ringing, overbright quality instead of its natural, soft, "breathy" quality.

Have the radio turned on and listen to a speaking voice. Does it seem natural and open, or is there an unnatural vibrancy and a muffling effect? The latter is a good test for an extra "richness" through the mid-frequencies that the phonograph manufacturers

are particularly fond of. Also notice the sibilants carefully. If they hiss out strongly, somewhat too pronounced, the high frequency response of the set is probably very good.

Be sure to listen carefully to the motor, without a record on it. If it has a periodic "um.....um" (especially prevalent in the cheaper motors that start with a spin of the hand) it is a lemon and will cause you untold agony. Have a record with long sustained passages, such as an adagio movement with whole notes through it, played and listen for a "wow"—that unfortunate over-the-waves, wailing effect caused by small variations in motor speed. This is usually not noticeable with faster music, but will upset your whole day, if you sit through a couple of slow movements of it—so be sure to make a specific test for it.

Notice the ease of getting records on and off the turntable, and if there is a changer, by all means watch it operate—there was a changer marketed about two years ago which actually flipped the records into an end slot like so many skee-balls.

Listen to as wide a variety of records as possible, always remembering that though the ear is the final judge, it can be fooled on first hearing, to be increasingly dissatisfied in the long pull. If the machine still satisfies you, and comes through the tests outlined here reasonably well—I don't say perfectly—then it will probably please you over a long period of time as well as can be expected with an all-commercial machine. If the technical descriptions in this article save one reader of *The American Music Lover* from buying a dud, it will certainly have been worth doing. If it stirs any number of readers to raise a little hell, as consumers, about the present commercial standards in sound reproduction, it will have succeeded brilliantly.

The writer will be glad to answer as best he can any questions raised by this article which are addressed to *The American Music Lover*, or to go deeper into the technical background that has been given in brief outline.

# SOME CONDUCTORS OF YESTERDAY AND TODAY

NEVILLE D'ESTERRE

IT IS WITH A TOUCH OF DIFFIDENCE THAT I venture upon an appreciation of orchestral conductors; for we have been advised, lately, by one who has occupied for many years an important seat in a famous orchestra, that there is little or nothing in the conductor's art, and that most of the baton-waggers, whose names are writ so large upon concert advertisements, are mere superfluous figure-heads of little or no account. For my own part, I have never played in an orchestra, but have only sat and listened to orchestras playing. While so doing, however, I have observed differences of outlook and method, in the matter of interpretation, between one conductor and another. Or, at least, these distinctions have seemed to me to exist. But now I am given to understand that this is simple self-deception—that one expects great things of conductors with great reputations (gained, heaven knows how!) and that what follows is merely a matter of auto-suggestion. When I add that an English critic of high distinction averred, not long ago, that musical interpretation, so-called, was nothing but eye-wash; that honest music inevitably interpreted itself if you left it to its own devices; and that all alleged interpretations of such music by individual performers were, in fact, misinterpretations: it is hardly to be wondered at that I approach this subject in fear and trembling. — But, by good fortune, I have a memory. That memory reminds me that I have been present at rehearsals, as well as at concert performances. It recalls to me, also, that I have conversed in an intimate way with conductors of orchestras about their work, when they have been off duty. I have even turned over the leaves of scores pencil-marked by a conductor who was certainly not wanting in ideas of his own about music, nor yet in the determination to compel his orchestral players

to accept those ideas, and to perform the music as he decreed. It will take more than the casuistry of the two gentlemen I have mentioned to convince me that such conductors are not interpreters of music in the accurate sense of that term.

The orchestra consists of individual musicians, and it needs musicians of class to make an orchestra of class. But, what is it, in practice, but the instrument on which the conductor, (if he is a conductor, not mere human metronome) interprets the musical thoughts of the composers?

Do we imagine that stage-plays interpret themselves? The playwrights and the producers could tell us something about that. But, in any case, the question answers itself; moreover, musical thought is a far more subtle and fugitive thing than thought expressed in words. The alternative proposition is that music is so childlike an art that any noodle can grasp a Bach prelude or a Beethoven sonata in all its implications as soon as he hears it played by a salesman on a player-piano.

And, how misinterpretation can exist as a fact, without interpretation also existing as a fact, is a complete mystery to me. Unless, of course, these are just different names for one and the same thing.

I have spoken of a conductor. His name was G. W. L. Marshall-Hall; he died in 1915; and almost the whole of his active career was spent in Australia. The latter circumstance was sufficient in itself to prevent his name from becoming famous in Europe and America; but I am not alone in regarding him as one of the greatest conductors of modern times. A difficult claim to prove; and I can only relate what I knew of him. His foremost trait—the chief impelling force of his being—was a burning faith in the value of art as a way to ultimate wisdom. Next, he

was a man of forcible and pugnacious disposition, having the healthy prejudices which go with a virile nature, and the same scorn for humbug in music as for humbug in manners and morals. And, next, it was he who, more than thirty years ago, opened the eyes of the humble individual who writes these things, to the supreme glory of Mozart.

The orchestra at his disposal in Melbourne was a far from perfect instrument. The shortcomings of his players tied him down, too often, to works of simple texture. But, when the hour of performance came, the listener, if he had ears to hear, missed nothing: no essential expression was lost or slurred over; all was made clear. There were other conductors in Europe in those days, with magnificent orchestras to conduct, who managed, none the less, to befog almost everything that they touched, who phrased like chawbacons, and had no idea of expression apart from violent contrast of tone.

Marshall-Hall grasped the essentials of expression—that was the secret of his art: the art of a man who went to a pioneer country, and by his own unaided efforts created there a focus of music second only to London in the British Commonwealth. It may be that the indifferent quality of his orchestra (due principally to financial exigencies) gave him the needful impetus. No musician, in the whole of my experience, understood so well as he the relation of tempo to expression. And his rhythm had the firm vitality of a healthy pulse.

#### *STYLE — QUIET AND INTIMATE*

Although he was of gigantic stature—as tall as Ysaye himself—his manner of conducting was quiet and intimate, like the manner of a man discoursing to a party of friends. And he followed the old-fashioned practice of rapping the desk with his baton at the beginning of a piece. His death was premature and accidental; by rights he should have been alive and actively at work at the present day.

There are strong affinities among conductors. A man's outward manner is so often an index to his ideas and his working principles. Thus, when I am present at a performance directed by Bruno Walter, I am reminded vividly of old-time performances when Arthur Nikisch was at the helm. But Marshall-Hall stood apart. In his outward manner, indeed, (as the concert-goer observed it) he resembled Felix Weingartner; but whereas Weingartner is positively Wellingtonian in his propensity to understatement, Marshall-Hall was often as fiery and tempestuous as Albert Coates.

The supreme reputation in those days was Hans Richter's. Now, Marshall-Hall was essentially an English conductor: that is to say, he was by nature and instinct, an amateur, although, by the gift of the gods, he was, like Thomas Beecham, an amateur of genius. Richter, on the other hand, was wholly the professional musician. As a bandmaster he has never been equalled, far less excelled. It used to be said of him, when he directed the Halle Orchestra in Manchester, that he could play any instrument in the orchestra as well as any of his players. But, above that, he had imbibed Wagner and Brahms, in his young days, in huge gulps, understanding their music better than they (when they had finished composing it) understood it themselves. Eventually he seems to have memorized almost every piece of orchestral music worth mentioning. He was certainly the most reliable of all conductors. Apart from post-Brahmsian music, with which he was obviously out of sympathy (his scornful summary of Strauss is well remembered in Manchester) he could always be depended upon to give a strong and adequate rendering of whatever music there was to be played; and in certain works he revealed, beyond any other conductor, past or present, the "divine fire". In Richter, who looked so comfortable and bourgeois, one did not expect that daemonic touch.

#### *YESTERDAY AND TODAY*

In those days I made a habit of concert-going. In these days I go when I can, and that is seldom enough. No longer is it open to me to choose my orchestra or my conductor; I have to accept whatever orchestra and whatever conductor happen to be performing, when I am free to spend an evening in a concert-room. Oddly enough, the few disappointments that have come my way in recent years are associated with conductors of long-established reputation; and I owe my happiest hours to conductors who have yet to win their way to universal fame. This circumstance, backed by my experience with gramophone records, makes me more than sceptical of the value of established reputations in this age of millionfold propaganda; and, in fact, apart from Toscanini and Beecham, there is no conductor of world wide distinction at the present day who, to me at any rate, reveals in practice the superlative qualities commonly ascribed to him—assuredly none whom I would mention in the same breath with Felix Mottl or Wassili Safonoff. I prefer, then, to speak of conductors on whom

our modern advertisement-pushers have not yet fixed their insatiable eyes.

First let me mention Georg Szell. He has command of orchestral matters, if I am not mistaken, in the city of Glasgow; and in happier times he directed the Prague Symphony Orchestra. When he swam into my ken he was conducting the London Symphony Orchestra, a very fine body of musicians (and, incidentally, the senior orchestra of London) in a Beethoven concert. I liked the way he accompanied Moiseivitch in the *Emperor Concerto*. It prepared me for the gratification I received in the *Seventh Symphony*. The *Seventh* is not my favorite of Beethoven's nine, and until that evening I had always found the third movement decidedly indigestible. But in some way Szell infused that movement with something of the fierce animal vitality of the rondo which follows it. For the first time in my experience it became an integral and essential part of the whole picture: as Beethoven obviously intended that it should be. And, as for the rest of the picture, I have never known it outlined so vividly as on that occasion. I do not mind saying, though some may think it smacks of sacrilege, that the *Seventh* on the Toscanini records, with the N. Y. Philharmonic, is not nearly so interesting a composition as the *Seventh* when Szell and the L. S. O. performed it.

#### LESLIE HEWARD

The name of Szell is doubtless known to music-lovers in America. Not so the names of Leslie Heward and Anthony Collins. Heward ordinarily conducts the Birmingham Municipal Orchestra; but one evening when I was able to go to a B. B. C. Symphony Concert, he was in charge of the proceedings. The *pièce de résistance* was the *Fifth Symphony* of Sibelius; and of that work I do not hesitate to say that, without a conductor of the highest merit to direct the performance, the best of orchestras could not possibly do justice to it. This is music of a subjectivity akin to that of Beethoven's posthumous quartets. The composer's thought is not implicit in the notes as they appear, but calls for elucidation on the part of someone to whom that music expresses a definite meaning; and it is only under those conditions that the meaning can be made clear to the listener. This is precisely what Leslie Heward accomplished: the whole performance was a revelation, and the splendid last movement was one of the most moving things I have ever heard. Here

is a young conductor of whom we shall surely hear very much more in years to come.

Anthony Collins is a newcomer among the conductors; but he is not a young man. For a long time past he has been the leading viola in the London Symphony Orchestra. Having retired from that position, he has ascended to the conductor's desk to direct the efforts of his old comrades. I heard him recently take them through an earlier example of Sibelius: the popular *Second Symphony*; and it was just such a performance as no ordinary bandmaster could have produced by any exertion of mind or muscle. The difficult phrasing in which the work abounds was handled with consummate art. When I entered the concert-room I had no idea who Anthony Collins was. When I left it, I knew he was a conductor of the first order.

#### LONG MUSICAL EXPERIENCE

It is not arrogance on my part, but simply the result of a long experience of music, that emboldens me to say that, if I heard from behind a closed door a second year student of the Royal College of Music playing Chopin's *Ballade in F* (or any equally familiar pianistic masterpiece) I should never imagine that Egon Petri or Walter Gieseking was seated at the keyboard. So likewise with orchestras and their conductors. There are differences which an old concert-goer cannot fail to detect. Had an ordinary bandmaster (there are several in active employment with first-class orchestras at the present day, whose names I could, but will not, mention) been in charge of the Sibelius symphony, I should have known perfectly well, without looking to see who the conductor was, that he was neither Beecham nor Henry Wood. But the performance which Collins directed might have stood to the credit of either of those famous Sibeliants, or, for that matter, of Koussevitzky himself.

I am grateful to providence that my belief in interpretation remains unshaken. What, after all, is interpretation but understanding put into practice? Eliminate it, and music ceases to mean anything—becomes a mere silly game of arbitrary rhythms and inarticulate noises. Ask the composers what they think about it. Read what one of the greatest of them, Richard Wagner, had to say on the subject. When orchestras begin to give concerts without conductors, my concert-going activities will carry me no farther than the cupboard where I keep my gramophone records.

# REMEMBERING EMMA JUCH

IRA GLACKENS

**M**ADAME EMMA JUCH, WHO DIED IN NEW York on March 6, was a singer who flourished in the heyday of the Golden Age, even before the Metropolitan opened its doors on Christine Nilsson as Marguerite.

Searching through the records of the thirteen years in which she was before the public, one lives for a moment in the days of the redoubtable Colonel Mapleson, who brought her out in London and New York; in the days of the old Academy of Music on 14th Street, hallowed in time; and in the delightful days when every self-respecting prima donna sooner or later headed her own opera company.

The Emma Juch Grand English Opera Company toured the U. S. and ventured into Mexico. Such institutions no longer exist and prima donnas reach an Ultima Thule in the grimy building on 39th Street. Yet the operatic caravans of other days seem somehow a more romantic (and less static) goal, and no singer of repute would then have considered a career full-blown in which she did not appear in opera in most of the states of the Union.

Radio has now changed all that, but what has cut short the race of singers who could accomplish so much?

Emma Juch, born in Vienna July 4, 1863, or 1861 according to some authorities, but brought to Detroit at the age of two, began her musical training under her father, who had first to be convinced of her serious intentions and great possibilities. Later Madame Murio-Celli coached her for opera. In June, 1881, Colonel Mapleson brought her out as Filine in London, and she added Violetta, the Queen of the Night, Martha, Marguerite, the Queen in *The Huguenots*, Gilda, and Isabella in *Robert the Devil* to her repertoire in quick succession. In the following October she appeared under the same management at the Academy of Music, N. Y., for the first time, in the same role of Filine. Minnie Hauk,

Ravelli, Del Puente and Campanini were also in the company. Emma Juch was the most successful of the debutants and remained with Mapleson three years. In January, 1883, we find him attempting to restrain her from singing for anyone else. Consistent and doughty Colonel! Lawsuits were as necessary an adjunct to opera as high C's in those days. Whatever the outcome, Emma Juch turned up the following May singing German opera at the Lexington Avenue Opera House, which was situated at 58th Street and 3rd Avenue.

It was William Steinway who brought her to the attention of Theodore Thomas and she accepted an offer from his manager to join the tour of Wagnerian singers headed by Materna, Winkelmann, Scaria and Nilsson. She alternated with Nilsson as Elsa and held her own in that illustrious company. Later Thomas made much use of her in his concerts and she was a great drawing card at music festivals all over the country.

When the American Opera Company was formed Madame Juch was the first singer engaged, and in three years made 164 appearances with it, as Pamina, Elsa, Senta, Eurydice, Chrysa in Rubenstein's *Nero*, and Marguerite. It was during this period that the famous accident occurred to her during a performance of *Lohengrin*. A piece of heavy scenery fell upon her, causing a bad scalp wound. When she regained consciousness, she insisted on finishing the performance supported by two women of the chorus. At her next appearance she received an ovation and many wreaths upon which were inscribed the words of the chorus, "Faithful and true."

"Faithful and true" suited Emma Juch well when, in 1889, the Emma Juch Grand English Opera Co. was formed, with Charles E. Locke as manager and Adolph Neuendorff as musical director. The prospectus promised a large repertory and a splendid company "carefully selected from both Europe and America". As this was to be an opera-in-English venture, one is interested if not entirely reas-

sured to read further: "Several of the artists have specially acquired the English language." But the company included Alonzo Stoddard, the distinguished baritone; Lizzie Macnichol, the popular contralto from Washington, D. C.; Charles Hedmondt of Portland, Maine as principal tenor; and Laura Bellini of Lebanon, Ohio (pupil, like Nordica, of Sangiovanni and Lamperti), who was to be entrusted with the high soprano roles.

The company started out with *Mignon*, *Freischütz*, *Carmen*, *Trovatore* and one or two other works. *The Trumpeter of Sakkingen*, *Figaro* (Juch as Cherubino), *Bohemian Girl*, *Postillion of Lonjumeau*, *Flying Dutchman*, *Meistersinger*, *Barber of Seville*, *Mari-tana*, *Martha*, *William Tell*, *Oberon*, and Nicolai's *Merry Wives of Windsor* were other works mounted or promised. It is interesting to compare this repertory with those announced by contemporary companies; one cannot help wondering if some of the popular old favorites would not prove successful and worthy of a rehearing, today.

But the venture, alas, was soon beset by troubles. The way was stormy in Mexico; the train was wrecked near Oxford, S. C., the engine and baggage cars leaping an embankment. Owing to the snapping of the coupling pins, however, the rest of the train merely jumped the tracks. No one was hurt; only an engagement was lost.

At last, in 1891, in Portland, Oregon, the valiant company found itself "awaited by a constantly increasing number of creditors" and got into difficulties besides with local affairs. Madame Juch declared she would go abroad in September and sing "English in England, French in France, German in Germany and Italian in Italy." "Aside from business considerations" she was quoted as saying, "I would prefer to sing here, but they certainly appreciate art more in Europe." Loyalty to America had kept her here, it was said, and there can be no doubt of this.

She was an immense favorite throughout the country, not only with the public but with musicians, and her position in the world of song was an eminent one. The variety of roles she sang is an indication of her versatility. Her personal beauty matched the beauty of her voice and there was something republican in her pioneering spirit. The tale is told that on arriving at Washington with her company she found a carriage had been sent to the station by her manager to take her to her hotel. "Ride while my company walks!" she exclaimed, and sent the carriage away.



Emma Juch.

Sincerely yours  
Emma Juch

The three records that Emma Juch made for Victor in 1904, ten years after her premature retirement, display a very individual voice and a type of schooling that does not exist today. The clanging piano accompaniments will trouble the ear untrained to listen to old records, but those who know how to listen to records of the period these discs will always be an important contribution to the phonograph. *Elsa's Dream* bears evidence of an effort to make the music dramatic which impairs a little the beauty of the voice. There is a use of the full chest tone very reminiscent of Melba's later manner and sometimes reviled by purists. In the *Tosti Serenata* the voice sounds are beautiful and the shading and phrasing are of course those of a highly polished vocalist.

The *Messiah* record, *Come unto Him* is one of the great records. In this Madame Juch stands forth as an exponent of perfect oratorio style; it is pure singing without any attempt at drama. The tone is unbroken throughout, there is no trace of distinct registers in the voice, and a certain indescribable exaltation descends upon the attentive listener, spring-

ing from one knows not exactly what—the faultless singing, perhaps, the tone of the voice.

While she could have shone in the opera houses of the continent and triumphed before "the crowned heads of Europe" (which was what pre-war singers were especially adept at doing), Madame Juch actually preferred to junket about America with her own company, bringing the glory of a beautiful voice into highways and byways of the land. For this Emma Juch has a particular place in the history of music in America and will always be remembered in the annals of Song.

## Record Collectors' Corner . . .

Julian Morton Moses

■ Among the recitals reminding us that the art of song is not entirely dead was the return to the concert platform during the past season of the justly famous Frieda Hempel. The magic she wove with the limited remains of a once tremendous range brought us back at least for one night to the days when opera in this city enjoyed great distinction under a different regime. But it is not our purpose to dwell upon her limpid tone or innate musicianship. Of these you can read elsewhere. Our job is a brief discussion of her records.

Frieda Hempel made her phonographic debut in 1906 with Odeon. By 1910 she had recorded over fifty selections for that company. These included the usual lyric-coloratura repertoire as well as some lieder and the following duets with the magnificent tenor, Herman Jadlowker, now cantor of the leading synagogue at Riga and well deserving of an article describing the hundreds of excellent records he made of every conceivable type of music. The Hempel-Jadlowker Odeon duets are:

X99665-6 *Carmen*; X99885-6, XX76290-1 *Romeo*; X99902-3-4 *Traviata*; X99905 *Lucia*; XX76902-3 *Huguenots*; XX76996 *Daughter of the Regiment*; X52538 *Boheme*, Act 1.

During the next three years (1910-1913), Hempel recorded for the Gramophone Co., again about half a hundred items, a number of which are still available. Those withdrawn from even the historical section of the cata-

logue included important arias from the following operas:

033144 *Lakmé*; 033165 *Robert le Diable*; 043193 *Wildschütz*; 043276 *Trovatore*, *Tacea la notte*; 043277 *Trovatore*, *Di tale amor*.

In 1912, Victor anticipated Hempel's debut at the Metropolitan Opera by issuing two records: *Ernani* (No. 88383), and *Les Huguenots* (No. 88382). Both of these had been made available in Europe the previous year. Two more importations: *Villanelle* (No. 88410), and the Mozart-Adam *Variations* (No. 88404), were added. In 1914, Hempel began her list of American discs which finally numbered over twenty-five.

Her domestic Victor recordings included different versions of Nos. 88383 and 88404, both of which were released under the same number, but which may be distinguished by the absence of the crown alongside of the catalogue number in the wax. This crown, by the way, is the telltale sign of an early importation. For Victor Hempel also sang for the first time in English such titles as *Ben Bolt* (No. 88541), *Ma Curley Headed Baby* (No. 88543); *Just You* (No. 87261), etc.

While in the United States, Hempel recorded many English and operatic pieces for Edison Co., all of which were hill-and-dale recordings not playable on standard machines. Her European records of the early 1920s were released by His Master's Voice and by Polydor (an associate company prior to the World War) and include such interesting selections as:

7-43043 *Wohin*; 7-43046 *Ungeduld*; 24001 *Norma*, *Casta diva*; 24006 *Don Giovanni*, *Batti, batti*; 24007-8 *Carnival of Venice*; 24017 *Dinorah*, *Shadow Song*; and 25016 *Lohengrin*, *Duet* sung with Kaszowska.

Frieda Hempel's phonographic career thus covered nearly the entire acoustic era.

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This month's bulletin of The International Record Collectors' Club includes two new releases and two re-issues:

HAYDN: *Les Saisons-Air du Laboureur*, and FLEGIER: *Le Cor*; sung by Pol Plançon. I. R. C. C. No. 145, 12-inch, price \$2.25.

These selections with piano accompaniment date from 1905 and represent one of the rarest and one of the finest interpretations of the most artistic bass voice of all times.

WAGNER: *Der Fliegende Holländer-Versank ich jetzt*, and *Wohl konn' ich*; sung by Johann Gadski and Otto Goritz. I. R. C. C. No. 146, 12-inch, price \$2.25.

The two parts above of the great Senta-Dutchman duet were released here by Victor in December 1912 but for some reason, the third part (No. 88372) was withheld. Whatever the cause, this does not detract from the very fine interpretations imprinted on this present release.

Strauss: *Salome-Jochanaan*, and *Dein Haar ist grässlich*; sung by Emmy Destin. I.R.C.C. No. 16, 10-inch, price \$1.75.

The creator of *Salome* recorded these ex-

cerpts in the city of its premiere (Original G & T Nos. 43874-5). Need we say more?

WAGNER: *Lohengrin-Du Aermste*; and DELIBES: *Lakmé-Dome érais le jasmin*; sung by Emma Eames and Louise Homer. I.R.C.C. No 44, 12-inch, price \$2.25.

Dating from 1908, the duets in German and French are eloquent testimony to the versatility and artistry of two of the very foremost American singers.

## SWING MUSIC NOTES

ENZO ARCHETTI

■ Duke Ellington and his orchestra returned from their highly successful concert tour of Northern Europe on May 12th, leaving in their wake a reassured public — reassured that this is still the finest jazz orchestra in the world in spite of the momentary popularity of Goodmans, Shaws, etc. The tour had other results also. There were some recording sessions in Paris of a most unusual nature. Barney Bigard, Rex Stewart, Billy Taylor, and Django Reinhardt waxed some numbers as a quartet. The report of one who was present at these recording sessions says that some remarkable jazz was waxed including *I Know That You Know*, *Low Cotton*, and three original pieces. These recording sessions presented unusual difficulties because no drummer was available (where was Sonny Greer?) and after three sides had been made without a drummer, Rex and Barney decided that such a set-up would never do. So, for the remaining sides Barney Bigard substituted as drummer, using the only equipment available at the moment — and old military-type side drum and one wire brush! While Rex and Django played solos, Barney drummed. When Barney took solos, there was no drumming. In spite of all this the recordings turned out excellently. We hope there will be no delay in bringing them out domestically.

On June 11th, Duke and his men will give the concert that was postponed because of the European tour. The place will be the World's Fair Hall of Music. The program will be practically the same as that presented at their European concerts, which is to say that it will be a good cross-section of Ellington's compositions, plus the often promised excerpts

from the mysterious "opera" Ellington is supposed to have written. Tickets will be on sale in record shops in New York two weeks before the concert takes place.

Incidentally, they say that Ellington has severed connections with Irving Mills. It is also said that he is now being managed by William Morris and that Charles "Jack" Boyd is his business manager.

A new group known as the National Swing Club has been organized in New York under the direction of E. J. Harris. Since Harris is connected with the *Orchestra World* magazine it is assumed that the new club is being sponsored by the magazine. In the prospectus an impressive-looking "Honorary Council" is listed, in which are included such names as Paul Whiteman, Artie Shaw, Duke Ellington, Jimmie Lunceford, Louis Armstrong, Tommy Dorsey, Chick Webb, and others. On May 29th this new Club sponsored its first concert, at the Hippodrome. Our impression is that it is a little bit late to come forward with a club bearing in its name the word "swing". The word is rapidly losing favor with the public, which is gradually reverting to the original name of "jazz".

The Hot Record Society of New York is beginning its third year with a new policy. For the first two years members who bought four of the six releases were entitled to a dividend record at the end of the year — a special pressing. Its new policy abolishes the dividend record and reduces the price of new records to 75c, beginning with its nineteenth release. The new subscription price is \$10.00, which entitles one to ten releases plus the magazine *Society Rag*, which is issued bimonthly.

As its seventeenth release the H. R. S. offers:

*Take It Slow and Easy* by Billy Banks' Rhythmakers, and

*Baby, Won't You Please Come Home* by Pee-Wee Russell's Rhythmakers.

The Billy Banks disc includes Henry Allen, Jr.; Pee-Wee Russell, Joe Sullivan, Eddie Condon, Jack Bland, Al Morgan, Zutie Singleton, and Billy Banks. It is a newly discovered recording, previously unreleased, recorded at the same time as their other classic *Who's Sorry Now* and *Bald Headed Mama* in 1932. Like its better known companion it is a fine example of Chicago rhythm, with an excellent Joe Sullivan solo and some fine sax and clarinet work by Pee-Wee Russell.

*Baby Wont You Please Come Home* is the Number 2 master of a recording especially arranged by H. R. S. in 1938 including, besides Pee-Wee, Max Kaminsky, Dicky Wells, Al Gold, Jimmy Johnson, Freddie Green, Zutie Singleton, and Wellman Braud (formerly of Duke Ellington's band). The record is outstanding for Dicky Wells and Jimmy Johnson, but otherwise rather dull and uninspired. Pee-Wee's clarinet is unusually raucous.

The H. R. S. has cooperated with the Victor Company for the release under the Bluebird label of thirty hot jazz records previously obtainable. The H. R. S. with the assistance of John Reid, who had access to the Victor files, chose the thirty records and supplied the personnel information for the labels. Hugues Panassié has contributed a booklet of fifty pages analyzing the records. All of the records are either cut-out jazz classics or previously unissued discs. Among the previously unissued records are: *Wild Man Blues* by Jelly-Roll Morton's group (B 10256); *Too Tight* by Johnny Dodds' Hot Six (B10240); and *Waiting At the End of the Road*, a piano solo by Fats Waller (B 10264). Nine of the records are pressed from previously unused masters and among these are included such names as Charlie Johnson, Fletcher Henderson, Jelly-Roll Morton, Johnny Dodds, Louis Armstrong, Jimmy Johnson, Fats Waller, and Jabbo Smith. The remaining records are all established classics, including four Ellingtons. The jazz loving public is urged not to overlook this important release. A complete list and complete information is offered by the Hot Record Society.

Blue Note follows up its wonderfully successful first releases with two new discs which are, in their way, equally splendid:

#### *Rocking the Blues*

*Mighty Blues* by Port of Harlem Jazz Men (personnel: Frank Newton, trumpet; J. C. Higginbotham, trombone; Albert Ammons, piano; Teddy Bunn, guitar; John Williams, bass; Sidney Catlett, drums). No. 3, 12-inch record. Price \$1.50.

This is one of the records made at the now historic 4:30 A. M. session at the Musicraft Studios. They present improvisations at their best when the musicians were most relaxed and entirely unhampered by restrictions of any kind. This is the true jazz. The musicians were chosen by the three sponsors of Blue Note records for their ability and this writer heartily agrees with their choice. Frankie Newton one of the best trumpet men alive today and deserving of ranking with all the other trumpet men who have attained headline prominence has been undeservedly neglected. His work on this record should prove his worth again. J. C. Higginbotham is already well known but he, too, aside from those early Luis Russell records, has been neglected. His solo in *Mighty Blues* is a gem. Albert Ammons is only now beginning to be appreciated. His playing on this disc is solid. Teddy Bunn has never received the credit he deserves for his excellent guitar playing. Panassié chose him for his special Bluebird recordings during his recent visit to the United States. That should be commendation enough.

Of the two sides, *Mighty Blues* is easily the better not only because of the tune but also because of the sincerity of feeling. This is genuine jazz. It is also the better recorded side.

*Weary Land Blues* by the J. C. Higginbotham Quintet (personnel: Higginbotham, Ammons, Bunn, Williams, and Catlett)

*Daybreak Blues* by the Frank Newton Quintet (personnel: Newton, Ammons, Bunn, Williams and Catlett). Number 501, 10-inch disc. Price \$1.00.

Since Benny Goodman made small jam groups fashionable, every recording group tries its hand at it. Actually, it is the ideal group for making genuine, unsophisticated jazz. Both these sides prove the point. Thoroughly unpretentious, they are nevertheless powerfully moving because of their sincerity. No attempt is made by anyone to hog the show. Everyone is perfectly relaxed. Each plays what he feels. Both sides are slow blues at their best.

Anyone expecting Artie Shaw flashiness or Benny Goodman showmanship is warned away from these records. For here is genuine jazz.

## EDITORIAL NOTES

■ At the request of many of our readers, we have added a writer on technical topics to our staff. Each month, Mr. Robert S. Lanier, whose first article, dealing with the fundamentals of record reproduction and what to look for in the purchase of a phonograph, appears elsewhere in this issue, will contribute an article or some notes on the technical side of recorded music. The various important points of reproduction and the how-to-do and how-not-to-do aspects of sound production will be discussed. Later, he will tell us how to build a home unit at a reasonable price, and also how to improve upon standard equipment. Mr. Lanier, who works for the U. S. Government, is an experienced sound engineer.

Readers who have technical and musical problems upon which they desire advice are invited to write to us. Upon occasion, whenever the counsel sought is considered of wide interest, we shall publish such letters with the answers. Since our correspondence is large, we ask our readers seeking advice to limit their questions, and also to number them so as to save space in answering.

Below is published a letter, received this past month, which we believe will be of interested to our readers.

### THIS MONTH'S LETTER

Dear Mr. Reed:—It was good to see the article on the comparative qualities of different makes of phonographs in a recent issue. I think more along this line, an unbiased criticism of new models such as you give of recordings, would be valuable to your subscribers as all companies insist that their machines are the best ones available and one learns only by experience, which in this case, is rather costly.

I have been using a sapphire needle for about four months and perhaps you would like to hear my reactions to it. I am using it in a new model Capehart Panamuse, which as you probably know is their new low priced model with same changer and pickup as their more expensive models. Do you approve of my using this needle?

(*In my estimation a sapphire needle should not be used in this machine. There is really no satisfactory needle; best would be steel changing each time. Chromium used not more than a dozen playings will probably prove as satis-*

*factory as any metallic needle. R. S. L.*)

In aligning the needle I could not at first use the chart as instructed because of the depth of the part housing the record changing mechanism. I was able finally to solve that problem to some extent by using a mirror. The needle was too long to clear the record at the proper distance, so the service man clipped part of it off. Would this have any effect in making the angle wrong?

(*The shortening of the needle should not affect it. In this pickup the bend in the needle should be in line with the head itself, since the pickup is always tangent. Turn pickup up and line needle with the head. R. S. L.*)

As for results with the needle, of these I am most uncertain. Black powder collects on the needle, and it looks as though it might be worn from the record grooves. (*This needle in my estimation is causing definite record wear in your machine. R. S. L.*) At time the pickup jumps a groove or two, even on new records, that is with the sapphire needle in it. (*Have pickup mechanism inspected for excessive friction or being out of alignment. Should not do this. Some sapphire points are too wide for record grooves; if machine does this with another type needle it definitely needs adjustment. R. S. L.*)

In the article mentioned, that you recently ran, it stated that a sapphire needle should only be used in the very best type of pickup. Would you consider the pickup on my machine in that class? (*Not exactly—but it is hard to tell just how good it really is. R. S. L.*)

As to tone, in new recordings the bass especially seems to be too prominent and I cannot turn the bass volume control completely open without getting a booming tone. On the machine I previously owned (a Philco) I did not notice this. (*The cabinet of this machine is probably resonant in the bass, so that most records will sound better with controls somewhat off, and some better with it all the way off. R. S. L.*)

The machine also has a "high-fidelity" switch, which I understand effects the pickup some way. My service man advises me not to use it as it distorts the music. It seems rather foolish to put it on a machine if this is true. (*The s.m.'s statement is not true. The switch is merely an additional cut-off for highs. R. S. L.*)

The service man advises me to use cactus saying other types would ruin my records. I have tried them but they last only for a couple of records. You would think that a service man could answer some of my questions, but

(Continued on page 74)

# RECORD NOTES AND REVIEWS

## ORCHESTRA

K. P. E. BACH (arr. Steinberg): *Concerto for Orchestra in D major*; played by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, direction of Serge Koussevitzky. Victor Set M-559, two discs, price \$4.50.

■ This concerto for orchestra has long been a favorite with Dr. Koussevitzky, and subscribers to the Boston Symphony concerts at home and in New York have often had the pleasure of hearing it. Now it becomes available to every record-buyer, and those who have not yet heard it have a treat in store for them.

Originally written for four strings, the work was arranged for small orchestra by Maximilian Steinberg. The first movement is sturdy and vigorous, and the last is attractive too, but the crown of the work is the wonderfully beautiful adagio. This may be said to be really one long-breathed melody from beginning to end, accompanied by poignant harmonies, with an especially expressive organ-point near the end. The use of an English horn for parts of the melody is the only feature of the instrumentation that strikes this listener as introducing a foreign element into the picture, but it is possible, of course, that many music lovers will look upon it as an added charm.

The performance is everything it should be: magisterial in the fast movements, sensitive and moving in the adagio; and the recording clearly and faithfully reproduces the rich tone of the magnificent orchestra. This is our nomination for Victor's orchestral Set of the Month.

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BEETHOVEN: *Eleven Viennese Dances* and *Egmont - Larghetto*; played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction of Felix Weingartner. Columbia Set X-133, two discs, price \$3.25.

■ According to Schindler, Beethoven, while working on the *Missa Solemnis* at Mödling, near Vienna, in 1819, took a little time off to write a set of dances for a 7-piece country band of the neighborhood. These dances disappeared. In 1908 Hugo Riemann published a group of 11 dances that he found in an old

manuscript in the archives of the Thomas-schule at Leipzig. The general style and the similarity of certain phrases in these pieces to passages in the *Bagatelles*, Op. 119, convinced Riemann that these were the lost dances mentioned by Schindler.

There are four waltzes, five minuets, and two *Laenderer*; whether they are Beethoven's or not, they have a grave and mellow charm. They are nicely played and well recorded here. The *Egmont* excerpt is the dramatic *Entr'acte II*, in E flat.

—N. B.

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BERLIOZ: *Roman Carnival Overture*, Op. 9; played by Symphony Orchestra, direction of Eugene Bigot. Victor disc 12436, price \$1.50.

■ This seems to us an unnecessary duplication. About a year ago Victor gave us a much better performance and recording of this overture by Fiedler and the Boston "Pops" (disc 12135); and Beecham's version of this overture has long been admired as one of the greatest modern orchestral recordings. The work is hardly so important that it warrants annual duplication. In our estimation, Fiedler and Beecham have provided absolutely adequate recordings until such time as reproduction advances another step or two.

—P. G.

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BOIELDIEU: *Overture to La Dame blanche*; played by the Orchestre Symphonique of Paris, direction of F. Ruhlmann. Columbia P-69599-D, price \$1.50.

■ *La Dame blanche*, first produced with enormous success in Paris in 1825, was very popular in the last century. Performances of it nowadays are rare, at least in America, and the present recording of the overture will probably constitute, for many music lovers, their first introduction to the music of a once-famous master of *opéra-comique*. This overture is gay, and contains some rather catchy tunes cleverly orchestrated. Although the performance is not the most polished imaginable, the disc is recommended as containing an interesting example of a type of music that is little known in this country.

—N. B.



# GREAT ON COLUMBIA

## BEETHOVEN'S "Appassionata Sonata"

PLAYED BY

WALTER GIESEKING

Columbia is proud to present this brilliant first American recording by the world-famous pianist, Walter Giesecking. Music lovers who treasure great piano music will find this Masterwork a triumph of interpretative genius, virtuosity, and recording fidelity.

Set No. M-365 Price \$5.00

## MASTERWORKS EVERY MUSIC LOVER SHOULD OWN

### SCHUBERT: Symphony No. 5, in B Flat Major

Sir Thomas Beecham conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra. A splendid, modern recording of a delightful, though seldom played, symphony.

Set No. M-366 Price \$6.00

### DOHNANYI: Quartet No. 2, OP. 15

Played by the Roth String Quartet. Composed in 1907, this work reveals the composer at the height of his creative powers.

Set No. M-367 Price \$5.00

### DEBUSSY: Rêverie

### R. STRAUSS: Serenade (Ständchen)

Walter Giesecking, pianist, playing two concert favorites, the latter his own piano arrangement.

Record No. 17138-D Price \$1.50



Sir Thomas Beecham



Felix Weingartner

### MOZART: Sonata No. 39, in B Flat Major, K.454

Magda Tagliafero (piano) and Denise Soriano (violin), two famous French artists, interpret the first American recording of this charming sonata.

Set No. X-131 Price \$3.50

### BEETHOVEN: Eleven Viennese Dances

("Elf Wiener Tänze") (3 Pts.)

### Egmont: Larghetto ("Entr'acte No. 2")

Felix Weingartner conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra in two sparkling Beethoven compositions recorded for the first time.

Set No. X-133 Price \$3.50



**COLUMBIA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY, INC.**

BOSTON "Pops" CONCERT: *Russlan and Ludd-milla-Overture* (Glinka) (disc 4427); *Deep River* and *Nobody Knows De Trouble I've Seen* (Arr. Burleigh-Jacchia) (disc 4428); *Five Miniatures* (Paul White); (disc 4429); *Doctrinen Walzer* (Ed. Strauss) (disc 12428); and *Goyescas-Intermezzo* (Granados) and *Eugen Onegin-Polonaise* (Tschaikowsky) (disc 12429). Played by the Boston "Pops" Orchestra, direction of Arthur Fiedler. Victor album M-554, three 10-inch and two 12-inch discs, price \$6.50.

■ This is surely a strange assortment of music; but then, if what we hear is true, Cole Porter, Gershwin, Kern and Paul White rub shoulders with Wagner, Tschaikowsky and Mendelssohn in the concerts of the Boston "Pops". Everything is informal at these functions: folks sit around at tables and enjoy refreshments along with varied music. It will be admitted that such a program as we have here may have its appeal in a summer concert, but its appeal in the more permanent form of a recorded concert would seem to us questionable. But since all minds are not alike, there will undoubtedly be many who will find this heterogeneous group to their liking. The sponsors of these records claim that this program, even though condensed, "gives a cross section of the marvelous performances of the cleverly chosen repertoire that have made the Boston 'Pops' the most successful summer concerts in the world... for nearly fifty-five years." Be that as it may, we have recollections of much better devised programs at the concerts of this orchestra.

There are a couple of recordings in this album that will undoubtedly incite the gratitude of many music lovers; we refer to the Glinka overture and the Granados intermezzo. The Glinka overture is a little masterpiece—a buoyant and utterly spontaneous composition. A modern recording of it has been badly needed; the Chicago Symphony recording has long been out of date and the excellent version that Albert Coates and the London Symphony Orchestra made later was never issued in this country. Fiedler gives the overture a brilliant and incisive reading; it is unfortunate that it is divided in the recording here because the bubbling exuberance of the music is somewhat marred by the break. Rimsky-Korsakoff thought highly of this piece; he called Glinka "a supreme genius". It is of interest to know that Moussorgsky liked this overture so much that he played it in a transcription when he toured as a pianist and accompanist in the summer of 1880.

The nostalgic qualities of the two Negro spirituals recorded here are completely lost for us in these orchestral arrangements. The human voice is necessary for this type of music, in our estimation.

White's five miniatures are ingenious descriptive trifles. One can imagine some fluttery female remarking after the *Mosquito Dance*—"Isn't that cute!" The pieces here are *By the Lake*, *Caravan Song*, *Walts of a Teenie Doll*, *Hippopotamus Dance*, and *Mosquito Dance*. Their brevity is commendable.

Eduard Strauss was the youngest of the three Strauss brothers. The waltz formula, as set forth by the most successful brother—Johann—is in evidence here, but the infectious spirit is missing.

Granados' *Intermezzo* from his opera *Goyescas* is a great favorite with music lovers. It is not great music, but it is well made, with an exotic sensitivity derived from Spanish melody and rhythm. Backed up by the popular *Polonaise* from Tschaikowsky's opera *Eugen Onegin*, this record should prove a best-seller. We salute Mr. Fiedler for acquitting himself with honors in the performance of all this music. If you do not favor the whole album, we recommend by all means that you acquire the Glinka overture. It's always a jolly opener for a recorded concert.

—P. G.

\* \* \*

SCHUBERT: *Symphony No. 5 in B flat major*; played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction of Sir Thomas Beecham. Columbia set M-366, seven sides, price \$6.00.

■ This delightful symphony was written during Schubert's nineteenth year. It is said to have been especially created for the society of amateurs for whom Schubert was in the habit of composing. The society, it appears, grew from a string-quartet ensemble at the elder Schubert's home into a small orchestra, capable of performing Haydn and Mozart symphonies, among others. The absence of trumpets and drums in the scoring would tend to stamp the work as one designed for an amateur group. The symphony is scored for flute, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, and the customary strings.

The amateur group with whom Schubert was associated for a period of about seven years helped him not only, to gain experience as an executant (he played the viola) but also to develop as a composer and conductor.

The extraordinary spontaneity of Schubert's muse exhibits itself in this symphony from the very start. His introduction is only four bars in length, a mere formality of establish-

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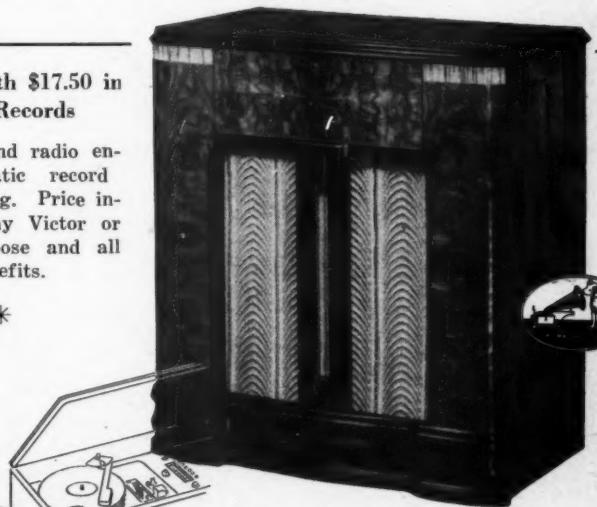
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ing the key, yet they are four precious bars. Immediately following comes a joyous, bouncing theme (surely subconsciously recalled by Dvorak when he wrote the first movement of his *New World*). The elation of this first movement, in fact of the whole symphony, suggests that Schubert was full of the joy of living when he wrote it, in the short space of a month, September to October, 1816. As with many of his other compositions, written to please his friends and to satisfy his own creative urge, he probably never thought of its being played professionally. And, according to him, it was not until 1873 that this gem of a symphony was given its first public performance; this was at the Crystal Palace concerts in England.

The songful second movement, wistful and benign, represents the youthful Schubert; it does not have the heartfelt yearning of the slow movements of his later symphonies, but it owns a poetic beauty that is as irresistible as are so many of Mozart's early slow movements. Beecham lavishes as much care on this movement as he does on a similar one by Mozart; never have I heard the middle section (beginning near the end of side 2 and continuing through most of side 3) played better. Beecham veritably breathes with the phrasing, like a singer, and since the movement is of a romantically songful character his style of performance is particularly treasurable. Tovey says the minuet "must remind us of the minuet of Mozart's *G minor Symphony*," except that Schubert's is simpler. The bright, merry finale is as perfect in its workmanship as any similar movement by Haydn.

Two previous recordings of this work exist. Since both are nearly a decade old, they need no longer be considered. As a matter of fact neither will satisfy once one has heard Beecham's rarely shaded reading, which is, of course, excellently recorded. The smoothness of the record surfaces here suggests that Columbia is using a new record material. Not once did I note the old suggestion of a worn needle as the pickup entered the grooves of the final inch of the recording. I feel certain that anyone who acquires these records will not have any complaint to make about the reproduction. This would be my vote for Columbia's recording of the month.

The symphony takes seven sides in the recording. The eighth side (a poorly chosen filler-in) contains the Hallé Orchestra recording of the *Entr'acte No. 2* and *Shepherd's Melody* from the *Incidental Music to Rosamunde* already included in Columbia set 343. It would have been better, in my estimation,

if Columbia had left the last side of this set blank; however, since this procedure would not have affected the price there will be those who will undoubtedly welcome the extra music.

—P. H. R.

\* \* \*

TSCHAIKOWSKY: *Serenade in C major, Opus 48*; played by the B. B. C. Symphony Orchestra, direction of Sir Adrian Boult. Victor Set M-556, three discs, price \$5.

■ Everybody knows the *Waltz* movement of this *Serenade*, but it is seldom that we get a chance to hear the rest of it—a *Piece in the form of a sonatina*, an *Elegy*, and a finale. If these movements are not the equal of the delicious waltz, they nevertheless are very characteristic of the composer in a semi-serious mood, and are well worth an occasional hearing.

Somebody once said that Tschaikowsky's music sounds better than it is while Brahms' is better than it sounds. It can scarcely be said of this performance that it makes the work sound better than it is. The playing is rather pedestrian in spirit and sometimes lacking in warmth; some of the effects come off well, but others, which seem not to be implicit in the music but applied from without, are less successful. The tone of the strings seems to want brightness and resonance, but this may be a fault of the recording, which, for its part, is undoubtedly responsible for the overstressed bass here. The booming of the basses may be lessened, of course, on instruments that have bass-control, but even then the result is not natural-sounding tone. The performance as a whole seems to this listener a little better than adequate.

—N. B.

\* \* \*

WEBER-BERLIOZ: *Invitation to the Dance*; played by the British Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra, direction Arturo Toscanini. Victor disc 15192, price \$2.00.

■ Toscanini unquestionably loves this music. Any one who has ever watched him conduct it and burst out in song in its climactic moments, will have been made aware of the conductor's fondness for it. His precision here is welcome; usually the music is played with too many loose ends. His dynamics are widely contrasted, more so than is usually the case.

Berlioz's transcription of Weber's original piano piece seems to be the one most widely played; but for me Weingartner's arrangement of this music, with its coordination of the two themes in the finale, is greatly prefer-

able. I wonder that no one has ever called Toscanini's attention to the Weingartner score, but then it may well be that the two conductors do not share the same viewpoint. As much as I admire this recording and value a well-recorded Toscanini performance, I shall be looking forward to a re-recording by Weingartner of his own arrangement.

—P. H. R.

\* \* \*

THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER (Key-Smith-Arnold), and AMERICA (Smith-Carey), played by the Boston "Pops" Orchestra, direction Arthur Fiedler. Victor disc 4430, price \$1.00.

■ A patriotic encore to the Boston "Pops" concert contained in album M-554. We hear these selections played by all kinds of instrumental groups but seldom by a symphony orchestra. Fiedler does justice to them and the recording here is excellent.

—P. G.

## CONCERTO

MCDONALD: *Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra*; played by the Philadelphia Orchestra with Jeanne Behrend and Alexander Kelberline, direction of Leopold Stokowski. Victor set M-557, three discs, price \$6.50.

■ The observation of the writer of the notes that McDonald composes perhaps "for no more profound reason than that he likes to compose, and that he finds musical composition the most stimulating and adventurous of occupations" seems to me to present the case for Mr. McDonald quite honestly. None of McDonald's compositions that I have heard has plumbed any great emotional depths or conveyed any compelling motivation or purpose. One is forcefully struck with the adroit workmanship of each score, and the composer's ability to handle capably the modern orchestra. Mr. McDonald tends to write most successfully when using folk material or forms, such as dances and established rhythmic patterns. His *Three Poems for Orchestra*, on traditional Aramaic and Hebrew themes, and several of his symphonies prove this.

It is appropriate that the composer be permitted to supply his own program notes, and this procedure has been followed in the case of this concerto. Mr. McDonald tells us regarding this work that "In some sections I have sought to develop a style of tonal fabric in which the solo instruments serve as a part of the orchestra. In other sections I have used the more conventional dialogue between

soloists and orchestra." Considered in relation to the concerto form as we know it from Mozart down, the three movements of this work lack unity. Thus one recognizes a modern sophistry in the first movement, a naïveté in the idyllic quality of the second movement, and a primitive vigor and exuberance in the final movement, which is based upon the Juarezca, a dance of Northern Mexico. The use of heavy, almost opaque, orchestration in the first movement seems to me wholly inappropriate to a concerto; none of the thematic material is too clearly outlined; but perhaps this effect is deliberate—the "style of tonal fabric" to which Mr. McDonald refers. The second movement, a set of free variations on an original theme, is more immediately appealing and far more sincere in its expression. The theme is an ingenious one, and the variations are well devised. The last movement is the McDonald of the "Rhumba" and "Cakewalk" movements from his symphonies. It is effective, cleverly contrived music, made thrilling in the excellent performance given it here. Undoubtedly this movement, with its Mexican rhythms and American jazz characteristics, will be widely admired. McDonald's use of jazz elements in much of his music conclusively proves that he's attuned to his times. As admirable as this is, it unfortunately makes much of his music seem more experimental than spontaneous. Undoubtedly Mr. McDonald "finds musical composition the most stimulating and adventurous of occupations", and it can be truthfully said that these are the qualities he conveys here. But, although he arouses our admiration for his ingenuity and his venturesome spirit, he does not stir us deeply or lastingly.

The performance of the concerto has been excellently contrived. The pianists, well known in concert for their two-piano performances, do justice to their parts, and the orchestra under Stokowski's compelling direction emerges in all its old glory of tonal splendor. The recording is good. —P. H. R.

## CHAMBER MUSIC

CASADESUS: *Les Recreations de la Campagne*; played by La Société des Instruments Anciens. Columbia set X-132, price \$3.50.

■ Henri Casadesus was one of the pioneers in the revival of interest in ancient instruments, and his society, which is largely a family affair, is still flourishing in Paris after the better part of forty years. Partly, perhaps, because his ambition to compose has been held

back by personal modesty, and partly because he simply wanted to increase the repertoire for the particular combination of instruments that the family played, he has been responsible for more than one hoax. *Les Recreations de la Campagne*, at least, is straight and undisguised Casadesus, although it is conceived in the manner and cast in the mold of the eighteenth century. The titles — *Sentier fleuri*, *Colin Maillard*, *Menuet Galant*, *La Ronde des Amours*, *Les Blés d'or* — suggest Couperin or Rameau. We cannot but admire M. Casadesus' skill and imagination, which have enabled him to work successfully and interestingly in the old idiom and forms. The only regret is the negative one that, pleasant as this music is, it should have been given the preference over so much at least equally charming and at the same time genuine old music that might have been recorded.

The members of the group are Henri Casadesus, viola d'amore, Marius Casadesus, quinton, Lucette Casadesus, viola de gamba, Maurice Devilliers, basse de viole, Regina Patorni-Casadesus, harpsichord. The recording is very good.

—P. M.

\* \* \*

DOHNÁNYI: *Quartet in D flat, Op. 15*; played by the Roth Quartet. Columbia album M-367, three discs, price \$5.00.

■ Here is an old favorite that was once recorded by the Flonzaleys. The Roths, who are of the same nationality as the composer, do notable justice to this score; and modern recording makes their performance the most expressive one. We hardly realized ten years ago what effects were lost in a recording of this kind, but a comparison of the two existent versions of this work—one made a decade ago and one perhaps a month ago—offers an interesting experiment in this field. Take the passage in the development section of the first movement, as an example, where the viola has one theme and the first violin another, and the second violin and cello merely provide accompanying figures. In the older recording the unity of this music was lost, while in this set it is fully realized, and the richness of the writing is, of course, better attested. This same comparison holds true throughout the entire score, particularly during the long songful passages of the viola.

Dohnányi has featured the viola considerably in this work, and to striking advantage. As the annotator says, the quartet is firmly rooted in the romanticism of the late 19th century. Of Dohnányi's chamber music, no less

an authority than Tovey has written: "It is without flaw in the purity of its style and the complete freedom from anything dependent on stage-conditions for its effect. But, just as the theme of the slow movement of Brahms' *A major Quartet* shows rhythms that could only have been invented by masters of the musical treatment of words, so the forms and devices of Dohnányi's chamber music... have a Mozart-like perception of what and of what is not adequate to produce intelligible form with rapid movement, a perception which betokens a composer who can handle stage-drama with a fastidious perfection of musical form."

There should be sufficient recommendation in these words to impel chamber music devotees who do not know this work to investigate it. I believe they will find themselves fully rewarded. However, to be more specific, let it be said that this quartet has been praised as revealing the full power of its composer's art; and, that Tovey further says that here Dohnányi achieves Wagnerian tone-poem effects "together with the swift dramatic action of sonata style." The main theme, heard at the beginning, plays an important part in the quartet, for it is heard again and again in the first and third movements, and both begins and ends the composition. The work is divided into three movements—an opening allegro with a slow introduction and contrasting slow sections, a masterfully-written, rapid-staccato scherzo with a slow inner section, and a richly impressive finale, with slow and fast sections.

—P. H. R.

\* \* \*

GRIFFES: *Two Sketches* (based on Indian Themes) for string quartet (3 sides); and CHADWICK: *Andante semplice* from *Quartet in E minor*; played by the Coolidge Quartet. Victor set M-558, two discs, price \$4.50.

■ Griffes died too young to prove his complete worth to America. He lived only thirty-six years, and the better part of his later life was spent in the performance of the duties of piano teacher, organist and choir master. I knew Griffes slightly. He was a retiring person interested in poetry as well as in music. His songs are among the finest that America has produced, and his *Lament of Ian the Proud* is surely one of the great songs in the English language.

Griffes was inspired by exotic subjects; there are quite a number of works to testify to this. His *Two Indian Sketches* were his only contribution to chamber music. They

were written in 1918 and first played by the Flonzaley Quartet. Griffies was not wholly satisfied with these sketches; he considered the second of slight value. He once intimated to me that he had plans for some chamber music of greater consequence. This was in 1919, the year before his death.

The *First Indian Sketch* has already been recorded by the Kreiner Quartet for the Friends of Recorded Music with the song *The Lament of Ian the Proud* on the reverse face of the record (disc No. 5). Based on a *Farewell Song* of the Chippewa Indians, this music owns an eerie and plaintive quality. Although marked *Lento e mesto* it should not be played too slowly; if it is, the music does not hang together too well. The *lento* marking, Griffies contended, was one of spirit rather than speed. The Kreiner Quartet has realized the marking ideally, and its performance has already been acclaimed by critics and by its inclusion in the Carnegie Record Library. The Coolidge Quartet's performance is technically proficient but too protracted for the good of the music (it is divided into two parts on disc 15416). The cold, impersonal tone of the first violinist here is less conducive to a true realization of the poetic nostalgia of this music than is the more sensitive tone of the first violinist of the Kreiner Quartet. The *Second Indian Sketch* is a strenuous dance with sharply accentuated rhythms. It is adroitly fashioned. (It occupies the first side of disc 15417).

George Whitefield Chadwick (1854-1931) was highly regarded as a composer in his time. His influence on the development of American music is irrefutable. His chamber compositions have been commended as occupying an important and distinguished place in American music. The present movement, from his fourth string quartet, is suggestive of Negro influence. It combines ingenious workmanship with emotional naïveté. The Coolidge Quartet plays this movement smoothly, but with little or no feeling. The recording of these works has been excellently achieved.

—P. H. R.

\* \* \*

**Mozart:** *Sonata in B flat major for Violin and Piano*, K. 454; played by Magda Tagliafero, piano, and Denise Soriano, violin. Columbia Set X-131, two discs, price \$3.25.

■ A recording of this sonata made by Jascha Heifetz and Emanuel Bay was issued about two years ago by Victor. It was an excellent job but, as Mr. Reed pointed out at the time, the balance between the instruments was poor,

the violin part being too prominent when it was merely playing accompanying figures. The balance in the present set is much better, but this version suffers from a far more serious fault—the first and last movements are badly cut. In the recapitulation section of the first movement there are three cuts totaling 38 measures; and in the finale there is one whopping cut of 89 measures. To be sure, these excisions allow the work to be got onto four sides but they also ruin the form of two of the three movements. It is a pity that this was permitted, since the performance is otherwise quite acceptable, if not as finished as the Heifetz reading, and the recording is good.

\* \* \*

**Schumann:** *Sonata in A minor, Op. 105*; played by Adolf Busch, violin, and Rudolf Serkin, piano. Victor Set M-551, two discs, price \$4.50.

■ This sonata was written in 1851, when Schumann had already begun to suffer from his fatal illness, and it is not surprising to find in the thematic material, in the harmonies and rhythms, the expression of a brooding and restless melancholy, which breaks out even in the tender, pastoral Allegretto. There



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seems to be no sign, however, of any impairment of Schumann's musical powers; indeed the sonata is full of subtle details of workmanship. There are three short movements, which fit neatly on the four sides of this set, the first movement occupying two and the others one side each.

The composition is ideally suited to Busch's sober style, and Serkin, of course, is one of the finest ensemble players alive. The result is a splendid performance, in which the emotional element is given its full value without being exaggerated. The recording is first-rate. A welcome addition to the record lists.

—N. B.

## PIANO

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata in F minor, Op. 57 (Appassionata)*; played by Walter Gieseking. Columbia set M-365, three discs, price \$5.00.

■ It was the Hamburg publisher Granz who nicknamed this sonata; yet the composer himself might well have named it "Appassionata", for he was filled with much ardor when he wrote the work, being in love with both Countess Therese von Brunswick and Josephine von Deym at the time. It has been suggested that he was filled with thoughts of Josephine, whose appeal was predominantly emotional, when he wrote the first and last movements; and perhaps with thoughts of Therese when he wrote the meditative variations on the peaceful chorale-like theme of the second movement. Therese's appeal seems to have been almost entirely spiritual.

There have been a half-dozen performances of this work on records prior to this set. Several of these are truly outstanding readings: I refer to those of Edwin Fischer, Serkin and Schnabel. Those made by Bauer, Murdoch and Kempff were unsuccessful from the standpoint of recording, and since the work is one that demands a wide range of color and expression the reproduction plays an important part. Here we have superb recording, recording that conveys the most subtle nuances as well as emotional vigor. Once more Gieseking gives a remarkable reading of a great work, a reading that is enhanced by his amazing command of tonal color. More than anyone else he conveys the rising and falling away of the several motives of the first movement, without a clear understanding of which, von Bülow once said, "an intelligent and intelligible interpretation" of this work is impossible. The emotional force of this movement is fully conveyed, but Gieseking does

not overstress it, as do a great many other pianists.

It is possible to penetrate deeper into and exploit further the meaning of the second movement; yet the tranquilly brooding theme speaks for itself when most simply conveyed. The second variation would have profited by a more consistent sustaining of the various melodic lines, and the pianist might have marked the left hand line upon occasion to greater advantage. But his lucidity and beauty of tone on the whole commends this performance to our admiration.

It is especially in the last movement, one of the most passionate of its kind written by Beethoven, that Gieseking displays his extraordinary pianistic gifts. Here, von Bülow wrote, "even the figuration must continually thrill and quiver with the liveliest agitation." And, in my estimation, Gieseking fully realizes the demands that the composer has made upon him. The perfection in his performance of the tremolo here is due, of course, to his unusually wide stretch of the fingers; pianists with small hands find these tremolo passages extremely difficult and too frequently convey that fact to listeners. That "hurricane of dynamic force" that the composer crowded into his last pages is played not without some feeling of restraint. The mind of the performer dominates his action; it is the only place that suggests forcibly to me that Gieseking has not been playing the work for very long, a fact which we understand is true. The demands of the coda, however, are extraordinary, and it is perhaps just as well that a performance as well ordered and as sensitively conveyed as this one should end up as it does.

The surfaces of the records are unusually smooth; in fact there is every reason to believe that in the past two months Columbia has been steadily improving its surfaces.

—P. H. R.

\* \* \*

CHOPIN: *Etudes, Op. 10*; played by Edward Kilenyi. Columbia set M-368, price \$5.00.

■ For some reason the Op. 10 *Etudes* seem to be more popular with the recorders than those of Op. 25. Every so often a new performance of the earlier studies comes along, but the later set seems to figure as a unit only when the entire twenty-four are done. Columbia's latest offering may be the first installment of a complete recording to replace their album 163, which contains both sets, played by Robert Lortat, and which is getting along in years.

The choice before those who want only Op. 10 lies between Kilenyi and Cortot, unless

arrangement of Strauss' song is well-enough devised and excellently played, but it leaves me completely unimpressed. Recording of both these pieces is entirely satisfactory.

—P. H. R.

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MOZART: *Rondo in A minor*, K. 511; played by Ignace Jan Paderewski. Victor No. 15421, price \$2.

■ If Paderewski seems no longer able to summon up the sweeping bravura necessary for certain difficult compositions—a sad fact made manifest in his recent recording of a Chopin *Polonaise*,—he can still do full justice to pieces that require chiefly a singing tone, sensitive phrasing, and a command of style. This little masterpiece, by Mozart offers few technical problems; and Paderewski plays it with the authority, the serene flow, the delicate nuance that recall earlier performances in his brilliant career. Also reminiscent of the earlier Paderewski, though in a less pleasant way, is the appearance here of a mannerism he still retains—the breaking of chords, which, when the tones of a chord are distributed between the two hands, sometimes amounts to syncopation. On the whole, however, this disc is not just another souvenir of a famous artist: it represents a fine performance of a great work, well recorded.

—N. B.

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SCARLATTI: *Sonatinas in C major*, L. 205; *C Minor*, L. 352; and *G major*, L. 490; played by Jacob Feuerring. Timely disc 1312, price \$1.50.

GALUPPI: *Sonata in D major*; played by Jacob Feuerring. Timely disc 1313, price \$1.50.

■ Myra Hess has recorded Scarlatti's *C minor Sonatina*, and Yella Pessl the other two. These works demand more fluidity and dash than the pianist gives them here. Essentially harpsichord works, they require a style of performance that this pianist does not seem to own.

Galuppi, a Venetian (1706-1785), was a clavier-virtuoso and a famous 18th-century opera composer. He was called the "father of the *opera buffa*". The present sonata hardly testifies to his virtuoso abilities; it is an agreeable work, lyrically graceful and emotionally unpretentious. One feels it would sound better on a harpsichord. The pianist plays it competently. The recording on both these discs is excellent.

—P. H. R.

## ORGAN

BACH: *Sonatina* (from *Cantata No. 106, God's time is the best time*); and *Chorale-Prelude - Christ lag in Todesbanden*; played by Charles M. Courboin on the Grand Court Organ, Wanamaker's, Philadelphia. Victor disc 15420, price \$2.00.

■ Apparently no one but the sponsors has had a good word to say for the Courboin Bach recordings, but there must be a market for them, as they continue to appear quite regularly. This disc presents two of the loveliest moments in the great composer's work. The playing of the *Sonatina*, or *Prelude* to the cantata *Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit* is distinctly dull. A far more satisfactory performance — although by no means an ideal one is that of a symphony orchestra conducted by Gustave Bret, which serves as filler for the four-piano *Concerto* (Victor set 366). But Courboin's conception of *Christ lag in Todesbanden* for once is not without a certain effectiveness, though it is hardly in the purest Bach style. His registration has a hushed and mysterious quality, and he does not indulge in his usual exaggerations. As usual the jumbo Wanamaker organ does its quota of hissing in this recording.

—P. M.

\* \* \*

SIBELIUS: *Finlandia* (arr. Fricker); played by Reginald Foort on his Giant Moeller Concert Organ. Victor 10-inch disc 26225, price 75c.

■ A well played recorded movie-organ version of one of Sibelius' best-sellers. Those who admire transcriptions of this kind will undoubtedly derive much satisfaction from this disc.

—P. G.

## BAND

Sousa: *Manhattan Beach March*, and REEVES: *Second Connecticut March*, played by Goldman Band, direction of Edwin Franko Goldman. Victor 10-inch disc 26216, price 75c.

■ Perhaps not the most popular marches that this famous band has recorded, these are nevertheless played with the same notable precision that characterizes all of the Goldman Band's work. The recording is less convincing, being of the studio variety.

—P. G.

they will go to the trouble of importing another recent recording by Raoul Koczalski. I cannot speak of that set, or even of the artist, since I have never heard any of his work. As for choosing between Kilenyi and Cortot, that will be a matter of taste. Cortot is a strong personality and a great artist in his own individual way. It is not necessary to remind his admirers any more than his detractors that he sometimes plays notes by the handful; he does the important thing, he makes the music speak. At his best he always has the spark of life. Now Kilenyi — a younger man — also has a spark, and his playing has a cleanliness that Cortot's has not known for some years at any rate. Furthermore, he gets recording that easily outclasses his rival, for Cortot's brittle tone has always been something of a problem to the engineers. I have always admired Cortot's healthiness: it is a pleasure to find Kilenyi healthy too. Therefore, those who want the personal Cortot touch will stay with the Victor album, while sticklers for technical perfection will be better pleased with the Columbia.

The twelve *Etudes* in Op. 10 are all here, although their order has been changed to suit the division between record sides. No music is more easily adjectived than this, and one test of a satisfactory performance is to see if the adjectives still fit as one listens. Kilenyi successfully encompasses the sardonic, the questioning, the mildly expressive, the delirious, the gently restless. His handling of the third *Etude* is a good sample of his success, for he has managed to express the intense longing of Chopin without descending to sheer sentimentalizing. He overcomes the stupendous difficulties of the more brilliant *Etudes* with assurance, if he does not always quite convince us that these difficulties do not exist. The recording, as I have hinted, is first-rate 1939 piano reproduction, and the new improved Columbia surfaces help in clarity and smoothness.

—P. M.

\* \* \*

HAYDN: *Three Piano Sonatas - B. and H. No. 35 in C major, No. 34 in E minor, and No. 37 in D Major*; played by Jacob Feuerring. Timely set No. 6, three discs, price \$5.00.

■ The neglect of Haydn's piano music both in the concert hall and on records is incomprehensible. Perhaps it is not as immediately arresting or as gratifying emotionally as the piano music of Mozart, but it owns a lively charm and a spontaneity that makes it enjoyable when well played. It is amazing that

only two recordings of Haydn piano sonatas now exist outside of these records: that of the *E flat major* (B. & H. No. 52), played by Horowitz, and that of the *F Major* (No. 23), played by Arthur Loesser (FRM disc 19). Both have been highly praised by critics. Mr. Feuerring, unknown to us prior to these recordings, turns in nicely controlled readings of three immediately attractive works. Neither in tonal fluency nor in dynamic range is he comparable to Horowitz or Loesser, yet his straightforward and effortless style and his clarity, so happily conveyed in the recording, make him worthy of the attention of record buyers. Of the three sonatas, I prefer the *E minor* and the *D Major*, and if I were going to buy just one I think I would be hard put to it to select between these two, although I would probably choose the *D major*, which the pianist plays with less restraint.

The recording here is very good, and the surfaces of the discs are consistently smooth.

—P. H. R.

\* \* \*

RAVEL: *Alborado del Gracioso*, No. 4 of *Miroirs*; played by Walter Gieseking. Columbia 10-inch disc 17138D, price \$1.00.

DEBUSSY: *Reverie*; and STRAUSS: *Serenade*, Op. 17 No. 2 (Arr. Gieseking); played by Walter Gieseking. Columbia 10-inch 17138-D, price \$1.00.

■ To Gieseking the piano keyboard is like a painter's richly variegated palette from which he can conjure the most fascinating hues and tonal nuances. His performance of Ravel's *Alborado del Gracioso* is unmatched. Although Sanroma gave us a dazzling and technically proficient rendition of this piece (see May issue), it is Gieseking alone who reveals all its tonal subtleties, its studied humor and varied effects. Gieseking makes us realize that Ravel should not be played too objectively. Gieseking has so definitely made Ravel's, as well as Debussy's, style completely his own that we hope he will give us early recordings of the former composer's *Jeu d'eau* and *Pavane pour une Infante défunte*.

Recently popularized through jazz channels, Debussy's *Reverie* is far more attractive in its original form. It is fitting that Gieseking chose to play this early composition, even though the composer is said to have regarded it as too hurriedly written to be of any value. Curiously, Debussy protested the publication of *Reverie*; maybe he foresaw its eventual misuse by the popular writers. Gieseking's

## VIOLIN

FRANÇAIX: *Sonatine* (1934); played by Josef Gingold, violin, and Liza Elman, piano. Friends of Recorded Music disc 25, price \$1.75.

■ The Friends of Recorded Music are full of surprises. This one seems particularly well-timed, following the Françaix *Trio*, which Columbia released last month. This young Frenchman is very much in the musical consciousness of America just now, and the desire for more recordings of his works should grow with each new release.

Perhaps the best thing about Jean Françaix is that he does not take himself too seriously. He seems to be utterly free of the old and false idea that music, to be important, must be not only long but very serious. For example, when Wagner writes a comedy his admirers consider that he has fallen a little from grace, or when Beethoven writes a *Pastoral* symphony, everyone knows before he hears it that it is second rate Beethoven. Jean Françaix does not worry about all this — he simply writes music in his own way. Because he has a real talent, and because he has had a good solid training, what comes out is good, if not great music. Of course this is in line with the tendency of the modern French school but Françaix has been fortunate to catch the spirit early. He is perhaps the youngest of the important Frenchmen today, and already one of the most significant. To be sure he does things that would have outraged the fathers, but he knows what he is doing, and his farthest wanderings from grace come out right in the end. He has a real lyric sense as well as his striking wit. We are fortunate in that he is not yet mature, because it is for us now to watch his development.

All these generalities have been inspired by this *Sonatine*, which really needs no description, but can speak very well for itself. It is even briefer than last month's *Trio* — for that reason it may perhaps be the best introduction for those who do not know the Françaix style.

The work is extremely well played by Mr. Gingold (who recently gave us an outstanding performance of the Ernest Bloch *Sonata*) and Miss Liza Elman sister of the noted violinist. One wonders why more has not been heard of this lady, for she performs her part with real understanding and musicianship. Happily, as Columbia did on the labels of the *Trio* records, the Friends have given the composition date of the *Sonatine*. The recording is exceptional.

—P. M.

WIENIAWSKI: *Légende*, Op. 17; played by Yehudi Menuhin and orchestra of the Concerts Colonne, Paris, Georges Enesco, conductor. Victor disc 15423, price \$2.00.

■ If I am not mistaken this is the first complete recording of the popular *Légende* made with the orchestral accompaniment. Since the work is an important one in the violin literature, and since the orchestral color is so vital a part of its total effect, the disc fills a definite gap. And, as was to be expected, Menuhin's playing is as handsome a job as the violin enthusiast could reasonably ask for.

This work belongs in that in-between category of violin literature, with compositions that are too short to be classed as concertos or to fit very often into the scheme of orchestral programs, but that require the resources of instrumentation for proper performance. Thus it finds itself in company with such works as the Beethoven *Romances* and the Chausson *Poème*. The *Légende*, while hardly a profound work, is surely worthy to rank with these. It has enough melodic appeal to endear it to the more casual listener, and enough character and *Once-upon-a-time* atmosphere to hold the interest of the more

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sophisticated — provided it is well played. Its opening figure recalls both *Boris Godounoff* and *Pélleas et Mélisande* — which is surely a commentary on its originality, since it antedates both of these works. Just what story, if any, lies behind this music, I do not know — and after all that is probably just as well.

Menuhin's performance shows a complete understanding of the romantic nature of the work, and thorough mastery of its technical problems. The tone he draws from his violin continues to grow richer with the years — indeed it has come pretty close to the glory of Kreisler in his prime. The orchestra, under Enesco, gives excellent support, and the recording is good.

—P. M.

## VOICE

BRAHMS: *Alto Rhapsody, Op. 53; Dein blaues Auge, Op. 59; Der Schmied, Op. 19, No. 4; and Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer, Op. 105, No. 2*; sung by Marian Anderson, contralto, with The Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, conductor. Victor set M-555, two 12-inch and one 10-inch discs, price \$6.00.

■ To get it over with, let me start this review with the manner rather than the matter of this set. The album is called "Songs of Brahms". Surely the *Alto Rhapsody*, with its recitative, arietta and chorale-like finale, is rather a cantata than a song, and the three remaining selections, presented in such elaborate orchestrations, have here lost much of that intimacy which is the essence of the song form. Treated in this way they are certainly no longer pure Brahms.

However, such matters will be of less interest to the average prospective buyer than the performances themselves. It is a matter for congratulation that the *Rhapsody for Alto solo, Chorus and Orchestra*, to give it its extended title, has now reached its second recording, for the rarity of its combination keeps it from the frequent performance to which its beauty entitles it. Brahms is said to have been particularly fond of this work — in fact so much so that for a time he slept at night with the score under his pillow — and of all his music none is more Brahmsian. The poem is a selection of three stanzas from Goethe's *Harzreise im Winter*, depicting a lonely man who deliberately cuts himself off from the society of his fellows, wasting his own worth in vain self-seeking. The final

section is an invocation to the Father of Love that this lonely heart may be enlightened. There is plenty of evidence that Brahms had himself in mind in making his setting of Goethe's text, and he may have expressed more of his own personal longing here than in any of his other works. This is not mawkish and sentimental soul-revealing such as some weaker composers have indulged in, but a sort of testament or prayer. No music could be more personal and yet no music could be healthier — surely this is the cream of romanticism. And in the Rhapsody are to be found some of Brahms' loveliest melodies.

Geiringer points out that in this work we meet for the first time in the Brahms choral works that archaic spirit which is so characteristic of the composer's later compositions. It is, he says, no mere accident that the foremost interpreters of the *Alto Rhapsody* have been the greatest exponents of Gluck's *Orfeo* — and he mentions especially Frau Joachim. This is interesting in considering the two recordings of the work, because in them we have it sung by two of the greatest contralto voices of our time. It must be admitted, unfortunately, that neither Onegin nor Anderson succeeds in penetrating to the innermost heart of the music. The Swedish lady seems to me to be more concerned with the sheer glory of the sound of her voice than with the significance of the text she is proclaiming. She indulges, too, in some rather questionable portamento effects. The recording, made a number of years ago, would still get by if we did not have the new one to show up its shortcomings. Even so there may be some who still prefer Onegin's rounder tone to that of Marian Anderson.

The American approaches the music more simply, and she does not try to superimpose more than her superb voice upon it. That she does not touch greatness is due no less to a slight rhythmical flabbiness than to her inability to feel the meaning of the text quite as deeply as Brahms does. All in all I definitely prefer her singing to Onegin's and the matter is clinched by the clearer and richer support given her by the Philadelphia Orchestra and the University of Pennsylvania Choral Society. The final section is taken a bit faster in the new recording, which is another definite advantage, although for purely physical reasons I would have considered it worth another fifty cents to have the three records all twelve-inch (I find warping a real danger in mixed albums).

Of the three genuine songs in the set two were in real need of doing, and I'm afraid

they still remain so. *Dein blaues Auge*—one of the real gems of Brahms—has not appeared on wax since Jeritza's acoustic record, and that disc set no towering standard of performance. Here it suffers from the ponderous orchestration, which turns its dreaminess into passion. Miss Anderson, for her part, keeps quite cool. She is more at home in *Der Schmied*, which would also have been much better with piano accompaniment. The only other easily available recording — that of Lotte Lehmann — suffers from the same thing.

Comparing the Anderson *Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer* with an antique by Julia Culp, an early electric recording by Gerhardt and a modern one by Elisabeth Schumann, I found Culp faster than Gerhardt and Schumann faster than Culp. Anderson's singing is the slowest, but whereas each of the other ladies convinces me for the moment at least that her tempo is right, Anderson's performance simply doesn't hold together very well. This is, of course, because of the same rhythmical shortcoming mentioned above. The Schumann disc shares the misfortune of orchestration, although to a lesser degree. The Philadelphia arranger did a real job.

This rambling review can hardly close without a word of warning about the recording — the Anderson voice has lots of "ping", and this may prove a trial to those who play her records on old-fashioned machines. The record surfaces are not the quietest I have heard.

\* \* \*

CHARLES: *The House on a Hill*; and WARREN: *My Parting Gift*; sung by Frederick Jagel, with accompaniment by Edwin McArthur. Victor 10-inch disc 1978, price \$1.50.

■ Mr. Jagel's first solo recording brings us two rather obvious American songs, not very different from many others familiar to radio audiences. *The House on a Hill* is from the active pen of Ernest Charles, a number of whose songs have been enjoying great popularity. Its companion is by Elinor Remick Warren, an ambitious musician well known on the Pacific coast, both as composer and pianist. *My Parting Gift* has the extra distinction of verses written by Mrs. Lawrence Tibbett. Mr. Jagel sings both songs cleanly as it his wont, and his admirers may thank him for not sentimentalizing unduly. His diction is splendidly clear. The voice has been faithfully reproduced, but the balance with the piano is not up to the latest standards.

CAIN: *Rarely Comest Thou*; sung by the Augustana Choir, unaccompanied. Victor 10-inch disc 1902, price \$.50.

■ Noble Cain, conductor of the Chicago A Cappella Choir, and Central Division Choral Director of the National Broadcasting company, is also an active composer of choral music. His style is quite obviously shaped by his experience as a conductor, for he delights in striking and original effects. On the evidence of this work I am tempted to call him an experimentalist, although this may be unjust to his compositions as a whole. He has here taken four stanzas from the eight of Shelley's *Song - Rarely, rarely comest thou, Spirit of delight*, and provided them with music that, to say the least, is arrestingly different. His aim seems to have been to use the text as the excuse for his novel inspirations, rather than to allow it to rule the flow of his music. Consequently, although some may find the mood of the verses mirrored in his music, the words are difficult to follow, and one could hardly say that they have been naturally set. This is virtuoso music written for a virtuoso chorus. I suspect that it was specifically intended for the Augustana Choir, because of such effects as that provided by one phenomenally high soprano. However, admirable as is the singing of this choir, and as clean as their intonation generally is, their performance of this difficult composition is not free from occasional unsteadiness. For all that, I suppose this is about as nearly perfect a recording as Mr. Cain could reasonably expect.

\* \* \*

GLINKA: *Doubt*; and FOLKSONG: *Night*; sung by Feodor Chaliapin, with piano accompaniment by Jean Bazilevsky, and violin obligato in the Glinka by Lucien Schwartz. Victor disc 15422, price \$2.00.

■ Here, at long last, is the recording of *Doubt* that Victor announced as "in preparation" in 1933, but given a different and perhaps more appropriate coupling. The combination is an unusually interesting one for several reasons. The two songs are typical of the art and folk songs of old Russia. Both of them were previously recorded acoustically by Chaliapin — the folksong as long ago as 1910, and the Glinka in the '20's. In neither case has the basso's interpretation undergone much change, and for once one of his electric records simply and easily supplants the acoustic. In more dramatic songs Chaliapin was apt to change his ideas so completely between recordings

that the later version was sometimes like an entirely new song. Presumably the lyricism of these two selections prevented any drastic changes. The voice is in superb shape here, and it has been excellently recorded.

*Doubt* is an important song, not only as a work of Glinka, but also as the type of mid-nineteenth-century Russian drawing-room ballad. Its melody is passionate and hard to forget, as it must be to express the torments of the lover who does not trust his mistress. She is demonstrative enough with him, but he fears what may happen when he is not with her. Of course such a dramatic situation is Chaliapin's meat, but he does not fail to respect the fine line of the melody. The obbligato is played by Lucien Schwartz in a manner to match the singing, though in recording the violinist has been placed a little in the background. The most important difference between the singing here and in the old recording is the addition of a high falsetto note at the close.

*Night* is one of the most beautiful as well as one of the most famous of Russian folksongs. Chaliapin's version is so highly embroidered that it almost constitutes a set of variations — in fact he never once presents the melody unadorned. Perhaps to his countrymen the tune is so well known that it is not necessary to do so. The 1910 recording was made without accompaniment, as were so many of the basso's folksong discs of that period. The unobtrusive piano accompaniment in the new recording makes very little difference, and the contrast between the records is largely a matter of fullness in reproduction. The impression of improvisation is successfully conveyed by the new performance, even though it does not depart very much from the pattern of the old one. This is decidedly one of the good Chaliapin records.

\* \* \*

KASTALSKY: *Dir singen wir*; and ALABIEFF: *Die Nachtigall*; sung by the Don Cossack Choir, unaccompanied, Serge Jaroff, conductor. Columbia 10-inch disc 17136D, price \$1.00.

■ To be perfectly honest, this to me is a one-sided disc. The broad and impressive prayer by Kastalsky is given a performance that has dignity and tonal splendor. This is the sort of thing the Don Cossacks do best. I have never been a complete admirer of this chorus, but I can enjoy them in music of this kind. The reverse selection, however, presents their other and less attractive side. The *Nightingale* is a familiar melody to most of us, but rather

in the brilliant version sung by high sopranos, and recorded by many of them from the great Sembrich down. The Don Cossacks' arrangement is a travesty on the really beautiful and melancholy tune, which is sung very freely indeed, and without much regard for line. To cap matters off there is a good deal of not very steady falsetto singing at first in the accompaniment, and then in the melody itself. And the final chord is decidedly sour. I have always found it possible to praise the precision of the Don Cossacks, even when I frankly did not like their singing, but here I cannot go that far. The recording is innocent of all blame.

\* \* \*

MACGIMSEY: *To My Mother*; and SCOTT: *Annie Laurie* (arr. Hollister); sung by John Charles Thomas, with piano accompaniment by Carroll Hollister. Victor disc 1977, 10-inch, price \$1.50.

■ The Victor Company is certainly entitled to some sort of prize for carelessness in affixing labels. Several times in the past year or so records have come through with the titles reversed. And now, if we are to believe our eyes, comes a disc with *Annie Laurie* on both sides. This odd arrangement may have its advantages—for instance it adds the surprise element to the obvious appropriateness of the MacGimsey song to the Mother's Day season. The disguised selection, it turns out, is a frankly sentimental tribute, sung in Mr. Thomas' customary open and full-toned style.

Mr. Hollister's arrangement of *Annie Laurie* amounts to little more than an elaboration of the accompaniment. Mr. Thomas lacks tenderness in his voicing of this song. The recording here is good, though a bit unfair, as usual, to the pianist.

\* \* \*

ROSSINI: *Il Barbiere di Siviglia - Largo al factotum*; and MATTEI: *Non è ver*; sung by Igor Gorin with orchestra conducted by Wilfred Pelletier. Victor disc 12437, price \$1.50.

■ Now that Igor Gorin has recorded the *Prologue* from *Pagliacci* and the *Largo al factotum*, I suppose he may be said to have won his spurs as a red-seal baritone. His singing of the famous *Barbiere* cavatina is in the modern tradition — that is he is untraditional wherever this is possible and convenient. Nowadays the technique of patter counts for more than it used to, if the recordings of elder artists to which I have recently listened are to be taken as fair samples. Nowadays one can't break off into *La-la-la* as often as used to be done.

This is, to my mind, decidedly to the good, for the song is a stunt and little more, and ejaculating the words is the important part of the stunt. There may be other baritones who ejaculate them more trippingly than Gorin — though he is no slouch in this — but I doubt if there is one today who can surpass the tonal virtues of this record.

*Non è ver* is not so familiar to our generation as it was to our fathers. It is a kind of Tosti-ish ballad by the composer of that other famous salon song, *Dear Heart*. *Non è ver* (or *'Tis not true*) may be found in collections of "English" ballads, but it seems logical to accept the Italian words as the original — and a glance over the English text confirms this assumption. The broad lyrico-dramatic melody expresses the anguish of an incredulous jilted lover. Mr. Gorin sings it for all it is worth, with a prodigal outpouring of his exceptional voice.

This is, not unnaturally, a loud record, and it should be such considering the material. The orchestra, as in others of the Pelletier-conducted series, has the shallowness of studio recording.

\* \* \*

SCHUBERT: *Ständchen*; and SCHUMANN: *Die beiden Grenadiere*; sung by Herbert Janssen, piano accompaniment by Michael Rauheisen. Victor disc, No. 15379, price \$2.00.

■ It seems a little strange that these two most familiar of lieder have not been more often recorded. In a sense, indeed, this disc is a first for Victor. The several versions of the Schubert *Serenade* listed in the current Victor catalogue are all instrumental transcriptions, with the exception of the Lashanska-Reimers duet arrangement, and that of John McCormack with chorus and orchestra. If I am not mistaken, in fact, we must go back to the 1908 Gadski (a beautiful performance, by the way) for a Victor record sung in German with piano accompaniment. As for *Die beiden Grenadiere*, Victor has it sung in English, French and Russian, and always with orchestra. Columbia does better by the Schumann, although Sir George Henschel's performance is to me the least satisfactory of his valuable records. He does too much underlining for the good of the rhythm, and he dresses up the accompaniment a bit. There are things to be learned from the old man even here, but he is happier in some of the other songs. In the *Ständchen* Columbia has Charles Hackett and Charles Kullman, both singing in English. Of course there are many foreign recordings of both songs, but as far as I know the field has long been open

for the definitive versions. Of course this condition has certain advantages: for I can approach these old war-horses with a reasonably fresh viewpoint, and realize — rather to my surprise — that they are after all good, if not first-rate, Schubert and Schumann.

In the present performance *Die beiden Grenadiere* fares better than its companion. This sturdy song is practically sure-fire stuff for so robust an artist as Janssen, and he has the good sense to let it sing itself. And we can thank him for taking the *Marseillaise* section in a stirring march tempo instead of broadening it as so many singers do.

In the *Ständchen* the singer's unfortunate lack of perfect tonal focus shows up in the soft passages, and results in some indeterminate intonation. But again his grasp of the song is intelligent and musical. Mr. Rauheisen treats the piano part as no doubt Schubert intended it to be treated, as an imitation of a guitar — tonally somewhat dry, and never the least bit sentimental. The recording on both sides of the disc is good.

P. M.

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**SPANISH FLAMENCO:** *Saetas* (with trumpets, cornets and drums); and *Alegrias*; *Petumeras*; *Seguidillas*; sung by La Niña de los Peines (The Lady with the Spanish Comb); with guitar accompaniment in the last three. Two ten-inch Columbia discs, 412M, 413M, price 75c each.

■ Columbia has recently been making a strong bid for first place in the production of unusual folk music. What with the Ninon Vallin records of Peruvian melodies and the Russian songs of Lydia Chaliapin, we have had some first-rate novelties in the last few months. This little collection of Spanish songs is not, of course, an arrangement, but the real article, and quite as fascinating as either of the other more sophisticated sets I have mentioned.

Just what the word Flamenco really means, and how it came to be associated with Spanish folksongs, are questions that remain unanswered. It does have definite connotations, however, for the Flamenco is a distinct style of singing and guitar playing belonging to the Andalusian gypsies. Both structurally and melodically the Flamenco betrays the strong Arab influence. There are a number of different types under the general name, both with and without dancing, and with and without guitar. All of them are what have been called "frozen improvisations," that is, theoretically they are improvised, but in actual fact they are pretty well set. The titles of the present selections are all generic. The one song sung without guitar is a religious incantation, and opens with the proclamation by the trumpet of the traditional Good Friday processional theme.

La Niña de los Peines is one of the most famous singers of this type of thing, and we may be sure of the authenticity of her style. The voice has a peculiar and very unorthodox sound that has a tremendous appeal. The recording, while it could hardly be new, is thoroughly satisfactory.

\* \* \*

**VERDI:** *Rigoletto - Caro nome*; and **DONIZETTI:** *Lucia - Ardon gli incensi*; sung by Lina Aimaro, soprano, with orchestra. Columbia disc 69489D, price \$1.50.

■ The Metropolitan's newest coloratura appears for the first time on domestic lists with this pair of old favorite war-horses. The voice is a very Italian soprano, open in quality and not always perfectly concentrated. Including even a bit of sliding and an occasional

sob, her style is good modern Italian. On the whole, though, while she does not succeed in suggesting drama by the quality of her voice, as the greatest singers have done, she at least does not seriously overdo the externals of emotionalism. The white quality in her lower medium register is probably emphasized here by the too forward recording. This may account, too, for the frequent "beat notes" with the flute. The high notes in *Caro nome* could do with more point, although that which finished the *Mad Scene* is fine and full. All in all this is good coloratura for 1939, but not of a quality to revive memories of the past.

\* \* \*

**WAGNER:** *Die Walküre - Du bist der Lenz*; and *Lohengrin - Euch, Lüften, die mein Klagen*; sung by Kirsten Flagstad, soprano, with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, conductor. Victor 10-inch disc 1901, price \$1.50.

■ Mme. Flagstad's latest record affords a study in her strength and in her weakness as well. The disc contains some singing that is Flagstad to the life, and some that may explain why her recordings have not always been the brilliant success we had all expected. For the spirit that went into the performance, the better side is easily Sieglinde's *arioso* from *Walküre*, although the voice is richer in the *Lohengrin* air. Part of the explanation of the latter's failure to satisfy is the too full and forward recording. Elsa is supposed to be singing from her balcony to the breezes—she is in a dreamy and exalted mood, and her voice is supposed to float quite distantly over a hushed orchestra. This record gives the impression of a prima donna standing up in front of an orchestra in a large concert hall, and singing beautifully but without the emotional spur provided by the costumes and glamor of the opera house. Flagstad's is not a really warm personality, however striking, and she maintains a better balance in the more passionate utterance of Sieglinde, where the music itself provides the necessary drama.

Two more objections and I am done: it is too bad that the orchestral close of *Du bist der Lenz* is cut off, and that the singer has a slight tendency to sing on the under side of the note (which, again, is surely emphasized by the recording). Mr. Ormandy, whose name leads all the rest of the domestic recording accompanying conductors, conducts the splendid orchestra with his familiar skill.

—P. M.

# OVERTONES

■ One of the most unique services that phonograph records have been called upon to render is the use that Lauritz Melchior and the Trenton Symphony Orchestra recently made of a group of discs by the famed tenor. Some of his recordings were pressed into service when an embarrassing situation arose, Melchior being forced to cancel a necessary rehearsal with the orchestra in order to satisfy previous concert commitments in St. Louis the night preceding his appearance in Trenton. Guglielmo Sabbatini, conductor of the orchestra, at Mr. Melchior's suggestion decided to use the tenor's recordings in the rehearsal with his accompanying group. Accordingly, while Melchior was singing in concert a thousand miles away, the orchestra rehearsed with the tenor's voice as it poured from a Victrola placed near the orchestra on the stage. The rehearsal, as well as the concert, was a success.

\* \* \*

That latest sensation of the music world, the Novachord, is an extension of the Hammond Electric Organ. In addition to its organ qualities, the Novachord reproduces singly, and in combination, with astonishing fidelity, a number of orchestral instruments such as the violin, clarinet, flute, cello, saxophone and trumpet. Horace Heidt and his Musical Knights seem to be the first band to use this instrument in recordings. The use of this machine is being contested by the Musician's Union, who allege that it is an artistic labor-saving device.

\* \* \*

Now it's hillbilly songs that are being swung. Redd Evans, who makes Vocalion records, says he swings hillybilly songs in a style that allows for a certain amount of recognition. How comforting that they can be recognized! Evans' publicity line is about the slickest we've ever heard; it reads—"By crossing certain plants, biological results combine the best features of the originals; something of this idea hit Evans when he decided to swing hillbilly songs." Evidently Mr. Evans isn't afraid of the hill folks.

## EUROPEAN RECORD RELEASES

### England

BACH: *Prelude in E fl.* (disc E-2709); Choral *Prelude — Allein Gott in der Höh* and *Kyrie, Gott Vater in Ewigkeit* (disc

E2710), *Dies sind die heil'gen zehn Gebot* and *Wir glauben all an einen Gott* (disc E2711), *Vater unser in Himmelreich, Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam* and *Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir* (disc E2712), *Jesus Christus, unser Heiland* and *Duetto No. 2 in F major* (disc E2713); and *Fugue in E flat* (disc E2714). Telefunken records.

BEETHOVEN: *Hammerklavier Sonata, Op. 106*; Louis Kentner. Columbia DX8139-43.

CHOPIN: *Concerto No. 2 in F Minor*; Alfred Cortot, Barbirolli and Orch. HMV-DB2612-15.

CHOPIN: *Ecossaises, Op. 72, No. 3* and *Grande Valse Brillante, Op. 18*; Alex. Brailowsky. HMV-DB3706.

DEBUSSY: *L'Après midi d'une faune*; London Phil. Orch. dir. Beecham. Columbia LX805.

HANDEL: *Concrtto Grossso in D, Op. 6, No. 5*; Weingartner and London Sym. Orch. Columbia LX803/4.

HYDN: *Sym. No. 86 in D*; Walter and London Sym. HMV-DB3467/9.

HAYDN: *Sym. No. 91 in E fl.*; Konoye and Berlin Philharmonic Orch. Decca PO5130-2.

LEKEU: *Adagio for String Orch., Op. 3*; Boyd Neel String Orch. Decca X236/7.

LISZT: *Consolation No. 3* and *Valse Oubliée No. 1*; Emil Sauer. Columbia LX807.

MOZART: *Quartet in F Maj. K. 590*; Lener String Qt. Columbia LX808/10.

MOZART: *Exsultate Jubilate, K. 165*; Erika Rokytka (soprano). L'Oiseau-Lyre 38/9.

MOZART-KREISLER: *Rondo from Serenade in D, K. 250*; Kreisler and Rupp. HMV-DB3731.

SMYTH: *Minuet from Fête Galante* and *Two Interlinked French Folk Melodies*; Boult and Light Sym. Orch. HMV-DB3762.

SUK: *Sokol March*; Talich and Czech Phil. Orch. HMV-B8889.

WAGNER: *Die Meistersinger, Act 3*, with Nissen, Ralf, Teschemacher, etc., Saxon State Orch. dir. Karl Böhm. HMV-DB 4562/78. Auto DB8643/57.

### France

DEBUSSY: *Sonata for viola, flute and harp*; Merkel, Moyse and Laskine. HMV-L1066/7.

MILHAUD: *Scaramouche*, suite for 2 pianos; Milhaud and Marcelle Meyer. HMV-DB5086.

WAGNER: *Die Walküre, Act 2*; Lotte Lehmann, Lauritz Melchior and others. HMV-DB3719/28.

(Full cast not reported).

RAVEL: *Histoires naturelles*; Suzanne Stappen. Odeon 188903/5.

### *Germany*

- BACH, W. F.: *Sym. in D mi.*; Chamber Orch. dir. Schmidt-Isserstedt. Telefunken E2599.
- BRAHMS: *Sym. No. 1*; Berlin Phil. Orch., dir. Eugen Jochum. Telefunken E2703/7.
- BRAHMS: *Sym. No. 4*; Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orch., dir. Mengelberg. Telefunken SK2773/7.
- FRANCK: *Psyche and Eros* from *Psyche*; Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orch., dir. Mengelberg. Telefunken SK2463.
- LISZT: *Spanische Rhapsodie*; Claudio Arrau (piano). Telefunken E1629.
- MOZART: *Entführung aus dem Serail-Konstanze, dich wiederzusehen* and *Die Zauberflöte — Dies Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön*; Peter Anders. Telefunken E1867.
- STRAUSS: *Ich trage meine Minne, Op. 32, No. 1* and *Traum durch die Dämmerung, Op. 29, No. 1*; Peter Anders. Telefunken A2782.
- WAGNER: *Rheingold - Einszug der Götter in Walhall*; Berlin Phil. Orch., dir. Schmidt-Isserstedt. Telefunken E2783.
- WAGNER: *Meistersinger - Fliedermonolog*; Rudolf Bockelmann. Telefunken SK1323.
- WEBER: *Der Frieschütz - Einst träumte meiner sel'gen Base*; Erna Sack. Telefunken A1771.

### **Some Foreign Recordings**

DELIUS: *Air and Dance*, and DELIUS-FENBY: *Two Aquarelles*, played by Boyd Neel String Orchestra. English Decca X-147, price \$2.00.

■ These compositions were apparently written in later life when the composer was blind and paralyzed. *Two Aquarelles* are arrangements by Eric Fenby (who lived with the composer in later years and wrote down his music for him) of wordless vocal works for choir. The *Air and Dance* is reflective music in a reminiscent mood. If Delius' name were not on it, one would be inclined to say that it was the work of a talented amateur. The *Aquarelles* possess more intrinsic value. The first is plaintive in a characteristic Delius manner, and the second is of a dance-like character.

Neel does justice to the music, yet, as always with this young conductor, I wish he had more give and take in his phrasing. This sort of music needs it. The recording is good, and the English Decca surfaces are unbelievably quiet.

—P. H. R.

MOZART: *Piano Concerto in B flat major, K. 456* (7 sides); played by Lilli Krauss and London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction of Walter Goehr. English Parlophone discs R20404/7, price \$8.00.

■ Although Mozart is said to have written this concerto for the blind pianist Marie Therese Paradis in September, 1784, it was first played in public by Mozart himself, according to a letter by the composer's father, at a Lenten concert in Vienna on the 14th of February, 1785. Leopold writes: "The concert was incomparable, the orchestra splendid . . . there was a superb new concerto by Wolfgang [the present one], which was still being copied out when we arrived, and your brother had not had time to play through the rondo before he had to supervise the copying. . . On Saturday evening Herr Joseph Haydn and the two Barons Tindi came to us and the new quartets (B flat, K. 458; A major, K. 464; C major, K. 465) were played. . . Herr Haydn said to me: 'I tell you before God and as an honest man that your son is the greatest composer of whom I have heard' . . ."

One is tempted to believe that Mozart was reading Shakespeare when he wrote the first and last movements of this concerto. The spirit of Puck and Ariel is in the first movement, which is one of the composer's most delightfully mischievous and volatile allegros; and the finale is assuredly an "Oberon's hunt", as Blom has said. The almost roguish elation of these outer movements is treasurably contrasted with the gentle pathos and the poetic expressiveness of the *andante un poco sostenuto*. That spirit and grace, which his contemporaries claimed Mozart was blessed with in his playing, is surely conveyed here in the extraordinarily sensitive and lucid performance by Miss Krauss. And under the fluidity of her tone there is the right linear precision, a firmness of touch that contributes to the vital and ingratiating qualities of the performance. As this concerto is among Mozart's most cherisable to me, it is good to be able to say that the recording here is warm and clear in tonal quality, and that the surfaces of the records are smooth.

The last face of the recording contains a fine performance by Miss Krauss and Simon Goldberg of an unfinished *Sonata* for violin and piano, K. 404, composed of two fragments: an *andante* and an *allegretto*.

—P. H. R.

**MOZART:** *Piano Concerto in C major, K. 503*; played by Kathleen Long and the Boyd Neel Orchestra. English Decca X229-32. Price \$8.00.

■ Mozart wrote this concerto not long after his *Nozze di Figaro* and just before his fine *Prague Symphony*—a work that surely deserves to rank with his last three symphonies. M. de Curzon has called this concerto “the Jupiter of the concertos”; but Eric Blom, in his book on Mozart, finds it a disappointment. Both men, in my estimation, over-shoot the mark. It is technically perhaps one of the most difficult of all the concertos, and Blom is undoubtedly right when he says the performer is not sufficiently repaid for the effort of overcoming its problems. The work is in true virtuoso style; the opening is more elaborate than that of a symphony and the whole first movement is constructed on a large scale. The concerto was written for the winter concerts of 1786 in Vienna, and Mozart unquestionably wanted to make a big effect. The assertion that the first movement is one of Mozart’s “broadest, deepest structures”, made recently by an English critic, also seems to me to be an exaggeration. There is striking breadth here, but little depth. The composer is too much concerned with ostentation and technical mastery.

There is a suggestion of lassitude in the gentle, stately grace of the andante, suggestive of a momentary world-weariness or a tired muse. The final allegretto, typical Mozartean sunlight, is both light-hearted and ingeniously fashioned. It comes off better than the other movements in the recording.

Kathleen Long is a reliable pianist; she meets the problems of this work with admirable artistry, yet her playing, at all times, is a bit too cool for me. One admires her exactitude, but one continually hopes that she’ll warm up more to her job. In my estimation, the piano part of this work demands greater variety of color and a more vital rhythm. Being a great admirer of the piano concertos of Mozart, I welcome this recording; at the same time I wish the performance had been planned on a larger scale. This is not, in my estimation, one of Mozart’s intimate concertos; and the chamber-music style adopted here seems unsuitable for the present work. The recording is good, and the surfaces are smooth.

—P. H. R.

## VICTOR PUPPET OPERA

### AT THE WORLD'S FAIR

■ In the Gas Industry's Building at the New York World's Fair, thousands of children and adults will have the opportunity of seeing and hearing abridged versions of the world's most popular operas—*Aida*, *I Pagliacci*, *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, *Carmen* and *Faust*. These famous operas will be given several times daily in the air-conditioned theatre of the building.

Upon a complete working model of an opera stage, the only one of its kind in existence, thirteen-inch puppets will realistically perform the various operas.

From the time the house lights are dimmed for the first act to the time the curtain drops on the last scene, hundreds of adults and children will be entertained by the story, music and color unfolded before their eyes.

By skilful coordination of puppets, music and lights, a perfect illusion of a grand opera performance is established. The puppets, traditionally costumed, appear as real, live performers. The illusion of reality was so completely achieved at a recent performance of *I Pagliacci* that the audience arose and shouted “Bravo!” at the end of the first act, and the tenor's aria was repeated by urgent request.

The settings for these operas have been designed by Ernest Wolff, and are exact copies of scenery used by the famous La Scala opera of Milan, the Metropolitan opera, and the Chicago Civic opera.

Each opera is complete even to the preliminary tuning up of the puppet orchestra located in the miniature pit.

160 puppet stars sing and dance in a repertory of seven operas. The wardrobe of the Victor Puppet Opera consists of more than 300 hand-sewn miniature costumes, each authentic in every detail. Entirely stringless in their operation, the puppets are manually operated from beneath the 48 square-foot miniature stage. The director of the puppet opera is Ernest Wolff, who as a 12-year-old school boy started thirteen years ago in a Chicago basement experimenting with puppets synchronized to Victor opera recordings. In the performance of each opera, Mr. Wolff has eight assistants, each of whom has a thorough knowledge of music in all its branches.

(Continued from page 51)

from experience I find service men know little other than how to repair a machine.

(For record changing, one of the best non-metallic needles is the B. C. N. Emerald. The needle problem is a personal one. Service men are not generally interested in music, and hence not interested in quality reproduction. R. S. L.)

Since *The American Music Lover* has helped me in so many ways, I hope it will be able to help me with some of the above problems. (We also hope that our efforts, at a distance, prove helpful. R. S. L.)

Sincerely,

Wesley Gore

St. Louis, Missouri.

\* \* \*

**SULLIVAN:** *The Mikado - Selection*; played by Louis Levy and his orchestra. Victor disc 26217, price 75c.

■ Dr. Swing has given *The Mikado* a new lease on life this season, although it was not apparent that the patient needed reviving. Once more Gilbert and Sullivan have provided the hit of the season in New York—although they themselves might not recognize their own product. I suppose this release was timed to capitalize on some of the new interest which

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the two hot productions have aroused in the hardiest of perennials, and perhaps to remind the record-buying public that Sullivan was not always swung. The potpourri includes such favorite numbers as *Gentlemen of Japan*, *A Wandering Minstrel* (the one "vocal refrain" in the selection), *Three Little Maids from School*, *The Moon and I*, *My Object all Sublime*, *Tit-Willow*, *The Flowers that Bloom in the Spring*, and *With Joyous Shout*. The orchestra is a small one, and well-integrated, and the performance has spirit. The recording could hardly be better. —P. M.

## In the Popular Vein

Horace Van Norman

### STANDARD POPULAR

AAAA—*Sunrise Serenade*, and *If It's Good Then I Want It*. Hal Kemp and his Orchestra. Victor 26215.

■ *Sunrise Serenade* is a charming, musically interesting novelty that's the product of Frankie Carle, talented bandsman and pianist. Although basically somewhat in the well-explored *Nota, Doll Dance* idiom, it manages to employ this idiom with a considerable degree of originality and Kemp's treatment of it is commendably deft and skillful. This is not only Kemp's best record in months but one of the most attractive recordings of its sort recently by anyone.

AAAA—*You Grow Sweeter As the Years Go By*, and *A Fool and His Honey Are Soon Parted*. Eddy Duchin and his Orchestra. Brunswick 8358.

■ Another chapter to the continuously amazing career of Johnny Mercer is contributed by the song *You Grow Sweeter As the Years Go By*. Unquestionably the outstanding lyric writer of them all, it was scarcely to be expected that he also wrote some tunes as excellent as his lyrics. It is true that *I'm an Old Cowhand* and *Welcome Stranger* bore his name alone, but neither of them was conspicuous for its musical interest. Here, however, is a thoroughly lovely tune, coupled of course to a lyric that fits it like the proverbial glove, and if Mercer has many more tunes like this one up his sleeve, he is an almost inevitable candidate for Irving Berlin's shoes, if and

America's premier songwriter decides to hang his harp on a willow. Duchin gives it straightforward, songful treatment, as is proper.

AAA—*To You*, and *This Is No Dream*. Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra. Victor 26234.

■ Sweet stuff by Dorsey, but, as is usual with Dorsey, done with enough dash and style to save it from utter saccharinity, at least as far as the band itself is concerned. The vocals of Master Jack Leonard, however, are another matter altogether. It seems to us that they are beginning to drip a little bit, which is a pity, since he has an attractive voice and was a definite asset to the band at first. If he could be persuaded to soft-pedal the marshmallow cadences a little bit, we still think he could be saved.

AAA—*Three Little Fishies*, and *Show Your Linen*, Miss Richardson. Kay Kyser and his Orchestra. Brunswick 8358.

■ *Three Little Fishies* is the most recent in that series of demented novelty songs which have managed to maintain a position at or near the top of the hit parade for months. Apparently what the country needs is darned foolishness and if something as completely vacuous as *Three Little Fishies* is required to keep sixty million people away from the foreign jitters for a few days or weeks, so be it. Kyser's version is by all odds the most amusing one made of the piscatorial masterpiece and features some amazing falsetto stuff by Harry Babbitt. Incidentally, its nominal author, Saxie Dowell, who is or was a member of Hal Kemp's band, is going to have a very tough time proving he wrote it, if the matter ever comes to court, since the words are identical to a bit of doggerel that's been going the rounds of midwestern and southern colleges for years.

AAA—*Gloriana*, and *You're the Only Star In My Blue Heaven*. Wayne King and Orchestra. Victor 26228.

■ *Gloriana* is a sort of follow-up to King's *Josephine* of a few years back. It's an attractive enough number of its kind and ideally suited to King's rather funereal style, while the same goes for the ultra-corny waltz on the reverse.

#### HOT JAZZ

AAAA—*The Droschky Drag*, and *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*. New Friends of Rhythm. Victor 26229.

■ This new group consists of a string quartet, plus guitar and harp, all from the ranks of the N. B. C. Orchestra. This, I presume, is what the jammers would call long-underwear

## Record Buyers' Guide

### OF THE NATION'S MOST RELIABLE DEALERS

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(Continued on Inside Back Cover)

stuff, but we like it. After all, there is no substitute for genuine musicianship and that is what we find in abundance here, plus a modicum of originality, considerable wit and sheer perfection of performance. *Droschky Drag* turns out to be a fox-trotted Andante Cantabile and a completely delightful, sensitive job it is, too. The reverse is a little muddled in spots but no less interesting on the whole, and the record stacks up as the most novel thing since the first Alec Wilder recording.

AAAA—*And the Angels Sing*, and *Got No Time*. Harry James and his Orchestra. Brunswick 8355.

■ This is a highly unusual and intriguing recording of that highly unusual tune, *And the Angels Sing*. It is amazing how completely pallid this lovely song can seem in the wrong kind of arrangement. James' treatment here is extraordinarily effective, being somewhat reminiscent of Goodman's arrangement of *I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart*, but not uncomfortably so. Not the least interesting feature of the record is the vocal by Bernice Byers, which fascinates as it repels. You'll have to hear it to know what I mean.

AAA—*Portrait of the Lion*, and *Something To Live For*. Duke Ellington and his Orchestra. Brunswick 8365.

■ This is first-rate Ellington. *Portrait of the Lion* is unusually crisp, incisive stuff for the Duke, who has a tendency toward sogginess occasionally in his pure rhythm numbers, while *Something to Live For* is a ballad which contains a lot more than immediately meets the ear, as is normal with Ellington ballads. In fact, the word Ballad seems woefully inadequate to describe Ellington's more sentimental efforts. They have a dark-hued character of their own, which sets them entirely apart from anything else in the popular song field. This is one of the very best of them.

AAA—*Wizz'in the Wizz*, and *Denison Swing*. Lionel Hampton and his Orchestra. Victor 26233.

■ Fantastic pianism by that fantastic individual, Lionel Hampton, is featured on this one. Employing what is probably the most unorthodox piano technique in existence, Hampton achieves startling and wonderful results with his thumbs, middle fingers and what not. It is all very exciting even though it doesn't make much sense and an occasional tenor chorus by Chu Berry helps to relieve the tension.

AA—*Rose of Washington Square*, and *The Sirens' Song*. Benny Goodman and his Orchestra. Victor 26230.

■ These are astonishingly ineffective performances by Goodman. One is prepared for routine stuff from almost any other band, but it is an unpleasant surprise coming from Goodman. Can it be that the loss of his premier bandmen is finally taking its toll? One hopes not, but it doesn't seem possible that the appallingly frequent changes of personnel in his group can have anything but a weakening effect. After all, the bands which retain their popularity over a period of years are those which remain virtually intact. Unless Goodman can keep the boys in line more successfully than he's been able to do recently, we fear his days as No. 1 band leader are numbered.

#### OTHER CURRENT POPULAR RECORDING OF MERIT

(The following are rated from quality of performance, regardless of record quality.)

AAA—*The Lonesome Road*, and *Mandy*. Jimmie Lunceford and his Orchestra. Vocalion 4831.

AAA—*Rose Room*, and *I've Found a New Baby*. Paul Whiteman's Bouncing Brass. Decca 2466.

AAA—*Lonesome Walls*, and *If You Ever Change Your Mind*. Ethel Waters with Edward Mallory and his Orchestra. Bluebird B-10222.

AAA—*But It Didn't Mean a Thing*, and *Runnin' Wild*. Gleen Miller and his Orchestra. Bluebird B-10269.

AAA—*If I Had My Way*, and *Ay Ay Ay*. Decca 2437.

Glen Gray and the Casa Loma Orchestra.

AAA—*Down Hearted Blues*, and *Gulf Coast Blues*. Mildred Bailey and her Orchestra. Vocalion 4800.

AAA—*Don't Worry 'Bout Me*, and *Once Is Enough for Me*. Ella Fitzgerald and her Savoy Eight. Decca 2451.

AA—*Sunrise Serenade*, and *That's How Dreams Should End*. Bobby Hackett and his Orchestra. Vocalion 4806.

AA—*Frankie's Jump*, and *Tab's Blues*. Frank Newton and his Cafe Society Orchestra. Vocalion 4821.

AA—*Blue Evening*, and *Rehearsin' for a Nervous Breakdown*. Red Norvo and his Orchestra. Vocalion 4833.

AA—*Swing Out*, and *Raid the Joint*. Erskine Hawkins and his Orchestra. Bluebird B-10224.

## Record Buyers' Guide

(Continued from page 75)

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